

# Rocktober

NUMBER 7

COMICS & MUSIC

*Rockin'  
Halloween!*

Ru Paul

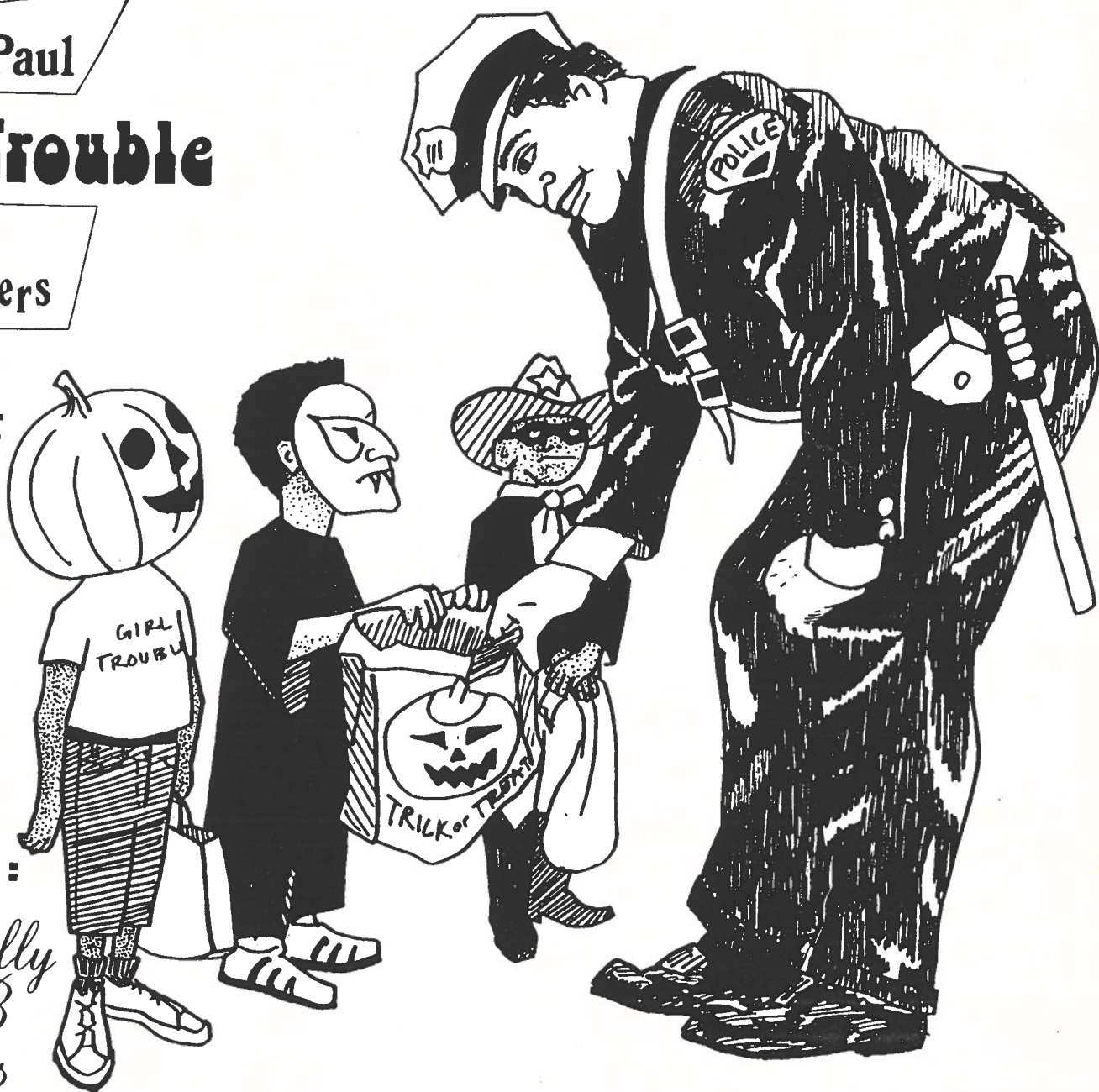
**Girl Trouble**

the  
**Farmers**

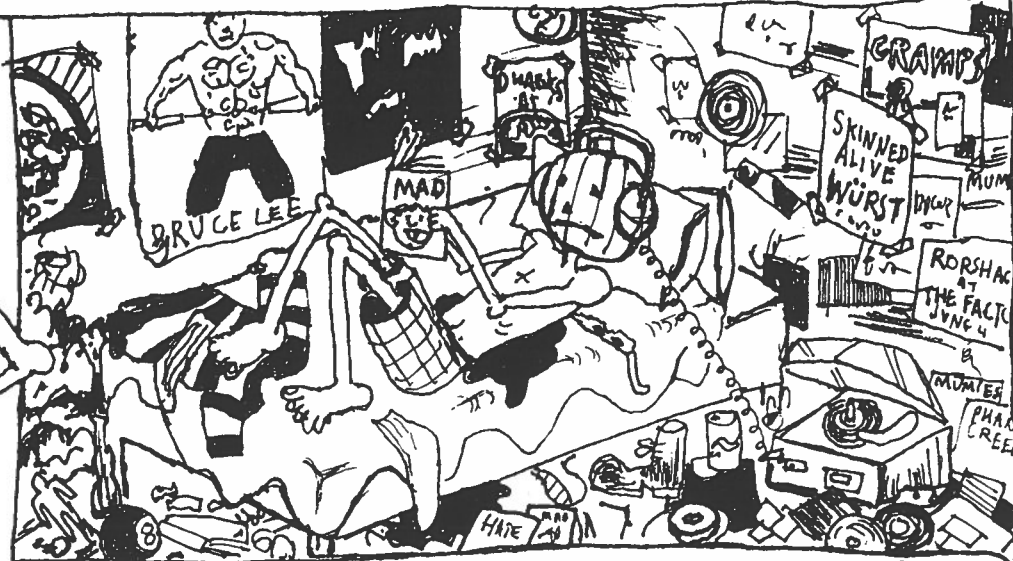
**WATTS**  
103rd St  
rhythm  
band

**PLUS:**

*Rockabilly  
R & B  
tragedies*



I'M PUNK'NHEAD, BUT MY POPS CALLS ME "PUNKY."



HE GETS ON MY CASE 'CAUSE MY ROOM IS SO JUNKY!

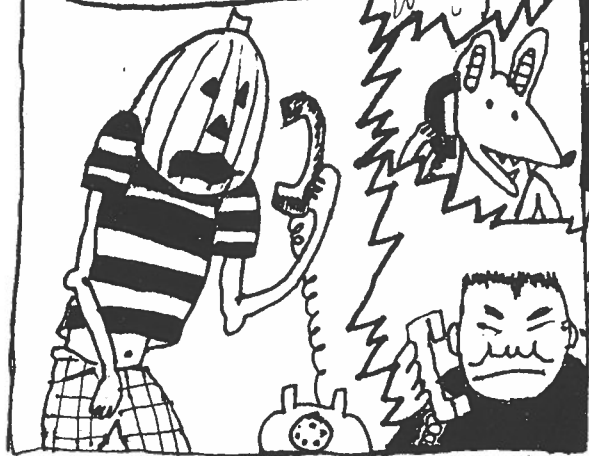
I WISH PARENTS AND TEACHERS WOULD CUT ME SOME SLACK!



I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING SO GET OFF MY BACK!

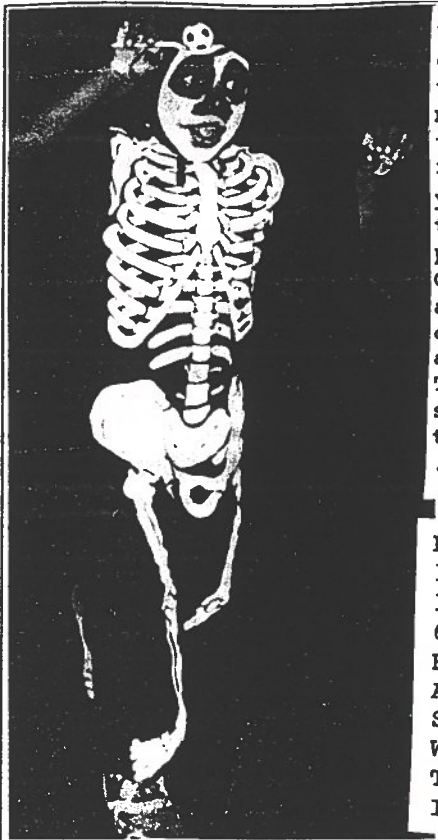


SOMETIMES I GET MAD SO I CALL UP MY BAND...



AND SCREAM OUT MY SONGS JUST AS LOUD AS I CAN!





YES! The month of October ROCTOBER-giant sized and energized! Within these pages read about some of the most exciting musicians on earth today! Cheer their triumphs, weep for the tragedies of the musicians of yesterday in our special Bonus Book® then cheer yourselves up with our patented sidesplitting Roctober Comics. they'll make you laugh . . . and they'll make you think. As colorful as late October tree leaves; as exciting as a Mid-October Frank Thomas World Series home run; as subversive as an October 31 house t.p.ing to the asshole with no candy . . . we are Roctober. GO SOX!

ROCTOBER COMICS AND MUSIC #7, 1OCTOBER '93.

1423 E. 53RD ST #2 CHICAGO, IL. 60615

BACK ISSUES AND SINGLE COPIES ARE \$1 + 2 STAMPS. SIX ISH SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE \$5, STARTING WITH ANY #. THAT'S GOING DOWN TO 5 FOR \$5 IN '94 SO JUMP ON IT QUICK-LIKE.

Excellent Cover: Caroline Shirley  
P.2 Punk'nhead by Jake Austen  
P.4 Rockin' Halloween. Sleepyhead intv'w and photo by Aliza Shapiro  
P.6 RuPaul Interview  
P.8 Farmers Interview. Art by Marcus Shaffer and Paul Crayton  
p.10 Cartoon by Eric Nix  
P.10 Cartoon by Ben Stone and Bill Watterson  
P.10 Graceland by Seth Feinberg.  
Send \$\$ and get his comics from Skidmark Press PO Box 293 Brookline, MA 02146  
P.10 BonusBook® instructions by Jason Lutes  
P. 11 Girl Trouble Interview. Art John Battles  
P.13 Cartoon by S.Dolan. Write him PO Box 1935 Iowa City, IA 52244. \$10 will get you a lifetime sub to his work.  
P.14 In The Jungle Babe by James Porter  
P.17 Saps by Higgins  
P.17 Johnny Edelstien cartoon  
p.17 Joe Fullerton cartoon  
P.18 Flamin' Waymon  
P.19 Rockin' Ace by Slink Moss  
Excellent back cover by Jason Shithead  
BonusBook® insert by Jake Austen

P.S. I'd like to send some shout outs to Freinds of Roctober. Grady Sain, Nandor Navai, Chris Lee, Marcus Shaffer, James Porter, Barbara Holt, Glenn Herman, Johnny Maguire and Joe 2nd Hand Tunes who all helped with research and writing for this ish, and also we appreciate the assistance in spreading the Roctober Gospel by Ben Kim (New City), Dave Hoekstra(Sun Times), Hugh Hart (Trib), Jim DeRogatis (who helped confirm our Punk status by giving us the lowest rating of all in his zine reviews in the Sun Times) and Doug Collier who talked ball with me on his "Rock Talk" radio show. Next issue will feature tributes to my great zine friends around the globe and beyond whose support truly fuels the candle flame in the Roctober Jack O' Lantern.

Be hip to the style with  
**PANTS THAT DON'T FIT** zine



WE GOT RADICAL, FVZZZONE, FRIDA KAHLO, JEN FOX, AND LOTS OF SILLY STUFF.

50¢, some STAMPS, TRADE, WHATEVER.

PO BOX 720716 BUT PLEASE WRITE ME A LETTER! -JOHN  
SAN JOSE, CA 95172

GOOFY SHITZ MAKES YOU LAUGH

# GO SOX!

HEY  
STRANGER



WANTS  
YOU-  
YOU  
WANT  
HEY  
STRANGER  
\$1-1597 HAIGHT ST.  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
94117

# NATIONAL DRAG

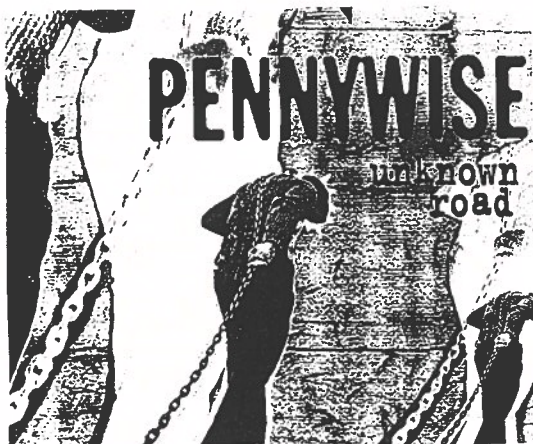


Debut Single  
on Haggis Records

"NEVER BEEN IN LOVE"  
b/w  
"TONITE"

\$300 ppd.

## PENNYWISE



C.D  
cass-  
ette  
Lp 86429

unknown  
road

CABLES  
#6 → SEND 1x24p STAMP  
2xIRCS/swap to: ROS/5, NEW  
HOUSE, CLOSE/CANTERBURY/KENT  
C.H. 780/UK

Make Checks/Money Orders Payable To:  
MAXTON KOC P.O. BOX 408028 CHICAGO, IL. 60640

# ROCKING

## HALLOWEEN BIRTHDAYS

1900

Ethel Waters

also made her club debut on Oct. 31.

1965

Annabela, lead singer,  
Bow Wow Wow

The  
greatest mohawked  
Burmese New Wave  
crooner yet

1963

Johnny Marr, of The Smiths  
and Electronic

Halloween 1967

-Ann Arbor,  
Michigan. A  
high water  
mark in American  
Punk rock  
history as the  
Stooges debut in  
writhing, rolling in  
glass glory. The  
audience is  
enlightened and  
appalled by the future  
of Rock. Pictured:  
Frontman and former  
Iguana drummer  
Iggy Stooge.

1966

King Ad Rock,  
Beastie Boys

As much as I loved Christmas, it wasn't my favorite holiday. That would have to be Halloween, because I got to go trick-or-treating. I'd get really big treats 'cause it was my birthday. I'd go out with my friends, but we were smart enough to stay away from the projects on that night. Not only wasn't it safe, but there wasn't much good candy in the projects either. So we'd get someone to drive us to the nicer areas and get better stuff.

I really got into dressing up on Halloween. Every year I was something different. Sometimes I'd buy costumes, but I liked making them more. I think I just liked making myself up, putting blackout stuff on my teeth, fake blood all over. That fake blood was my favorite. I loved that stuff!

For the last four years I've dressed up as the same thing—a sniper. I put stripes all over my face, do a camouflage look—not like Army camouflage, more like an urban sniper. I like that costume 'cause it's simple and easy. I don't have to go out and buy anything, just throw some makeup on. Yep, yep, I still dress up for Halloween. Until I die I'm gonna dress up on my birthday every year.

from his book "Ice On Ice"

# THE STOOGES

Halloween 1942:

Bing Crosby's ass kicking hit single  
"White Christmas" hits #1 for the first  
of many times, embarking on a sales  
journey with a destination called #1 Record  
in History.

## Corndolly

Well, I was tripping on acid and from my window I could see the Halloween parade -Lou Reed has a song about it, "Halloween Parade", from the album New York. I saw the craziest things. These two people were dressed as The Birds, the Alfred Hitchcock movie. He had all these toy birds on elastic and she'd scream while he threw them at her so they'd attack. There was a chessboard where the people as giant chess pieces would be on the board.

from Bitcher #4

"Bohemian  
Rhapsody"  
released

Halloween 1975

Ami

# HALLLOWEEN!



Scumrock G.G. Allin guaranteed a Halloween onstage suicide that would take audience members with him, but prison terms kept him off stage every All Hallows 'til this year, but he punked out and O.D.ed offstage months early. Sucker.



A rocking New England combo definitely worth catching. Interviewed by Aliza  
Aliza: What's your favorite Halloween costume you wore?

Mike: Princess Leia when I was in 5th grade. (Later he admitted he'd been Luke Skywalker, but he liked Leia better.

Rachael: Raggedy Andy, little sis was Ann  
Chris: Dark red lipstick.

## Ride-Quater-Mile

Ron Riddle, former BOC drummer: Halloween was probably my favorite holiday- me and my Dad used to do a Spook House in the basement and we had all these crazy walls and crooked corridors- with a slide down into the thing and people in cages- it was WILD!

## STRUTTER

KISS TRIBUTE BAND

from Roctober #4

POST-MISFITS AND PRE-'DANZIG' GLENN DANZIG'S BAND WAS NAMED AFTER THE CELTIC CELEBRATION HALLOWEEN IS BASED ON...

## SAMHAIN



## THE PHANTOM CREEPERS

Debut Halloween 1991



## THE PHANTOMS

Debut Halloween 1990



## THE GOBLINS

Debut Halloween 1992



Jake: O.K., can you tell me about your best Halloween when you were kids?  
Scott: 1977.  
Jake: What were you?  
Scott: Ace Frehley. 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981 etc etc.  
Gary: The best Halloween, probably about three years ago. But every year I've been Peter Criss. I've been Eric Carr once.

from Roctober #3

Halloween 1967-#1 single in America:

"To Sir With Love" by



## CHUMBAWAMBA

from Roctober #2

Lisa: We don't really 'ave 'alloween in the way you 'ave it. I mean we 'ave 'alloween, but it's more laid back. In England you've got Guy Fawkes' Day, 5th of November, where we celebrate Guy Fawkes trying to burn down the house of Parliament and everybody has a fire. All the kids in England...light a bonfire every year...Guy Fawkes is brilliant.

# RUPAUL

by Najuma Stewart

Interview by Najuma and Jake

There is something incredibly infectious about the glamour that is RuPaul. When I heard that this tall, blonde, Black, drag-queen diva extraordinaire was going to perform at the China Club, I immediately knew that I had to wear a blonde wig to the show. It would be my way of saying "Go, girl!" to an entertainer who had captured my interest and admiration even before I sought out the story behind the striking image.

One photograph, the cover of a 12" single "Supermodel of the World," (along with the song itself) that compelled me to find out who this person was. How did this man achieve such a fabulous look? I read a long essay about RuPaul in the New Yorker in which I learned that he has been on the drag-queen scene for years, but his most recent, glamorous incarnation has proven to be his most successful.

I found an early album, "RuPaul is Star Booty: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack" on which RuPaul impersonates and pays tribute to the tough, yet very sexy film characters played by women like Pam Grier (Friday Foster, Sheba, Baby, Foxy Brown) and Tamara Dobson (Cleopatra Jones) in the Blaxploitation era. As "Star Booty," RuPaul totes a huge gun in a too short, glitter mini-dress, ready to take on "The Man." But the black and white photos and heavy black wig on the "Star Booty" cover hardly display the sheer gorgeousness that RuPaul flaunts as the "Supermodel of the World."

RuPaul plays dress-up in front of the world, transforming his male body into the image of a fabulously feminine high fashion diva. Although RuPaul presents himself in costume (women's clothing, heavy make-up, intricate blonde wigs), what I find to be so exciting and refreshing about him is his authenticity. RuPaul insists that he does his thing out of a devotion to self-expression and self-love. "If you don't love yourself," the down-to-earth RuPaul asks, "how you gonna love anybody else?" RuPaul dares us to be honest with ourselves -- we all "dress up" for the roles that we choose to play in society, and we should respect each other's right to express ourselves as we please.

RuPaul has also said that if you want to know what he's like beneath all the make-up and hair, just listen to his album,

Supermodel of the World. It is a toe-tapping, rump-shaking collection of jams that draws from disco, funk and house, and features cameos by LaWanda ("Aunt Esther") Page (who recounts in her inimitable style the inspiring story of the Supermodel's rise from the projects of Detroit to the runways of Paris). RuPaul can sing, and his tune "Back To My Roots" is an especially impressive show of appreciation for African American culture, family, style and music.

RuPaul has become a media sensation, appearing on most of the major talk-shows, and expected to soon star in major motion pictures. There is also talk of a RuPaul doll, since, as he told John and Leeza, he more closely approximates the measurements of a Barbie than most women. I know I'll be first in line at Toys R Us to get my RuPaul fashion figure, because he thinks positive, loves life, makes great records and puts on an incredible show. RuPaul also responds to his fan mail, and returned some questions Jake and I sent him with a quickness no other diva could possibly match.

ROCTOBER: Could you tell us about the best Halloween you ever had?

RUPAUL: *Kids, everyday is Halloween to me!*

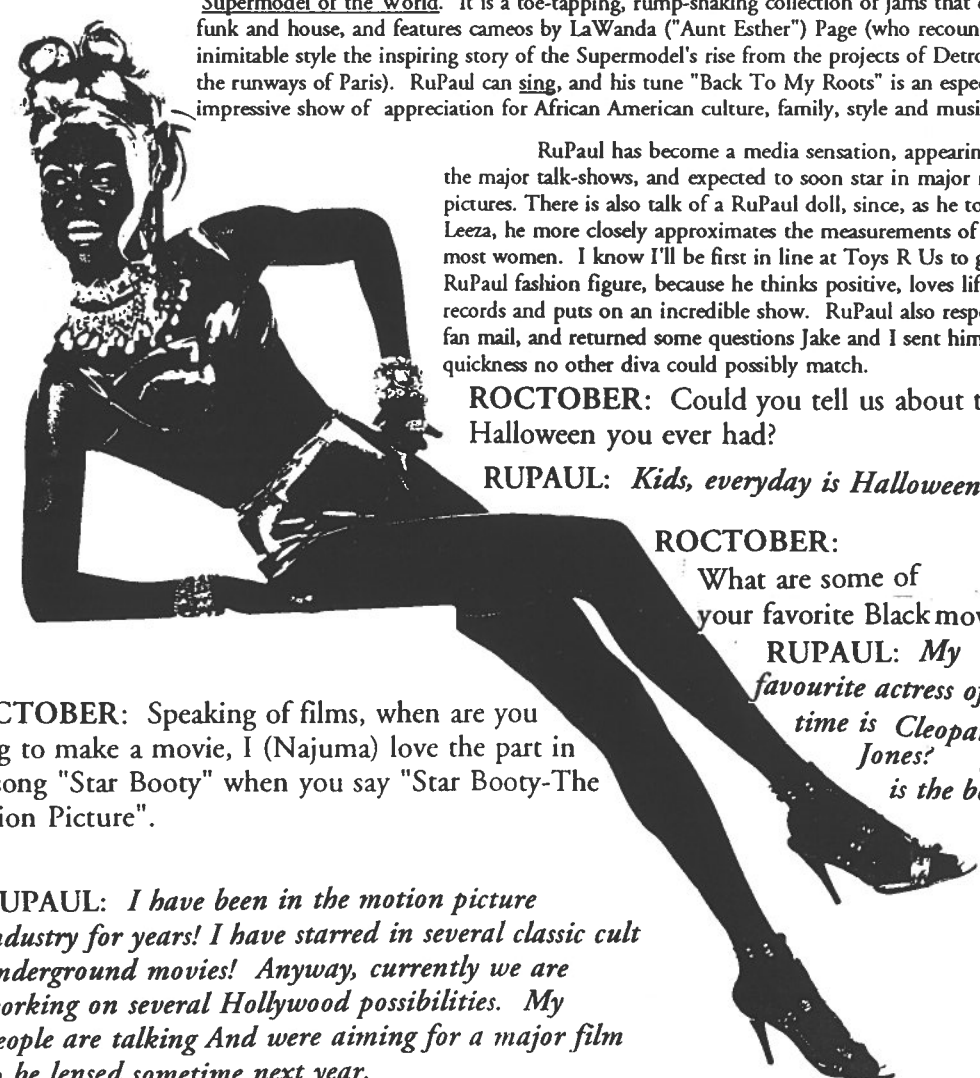
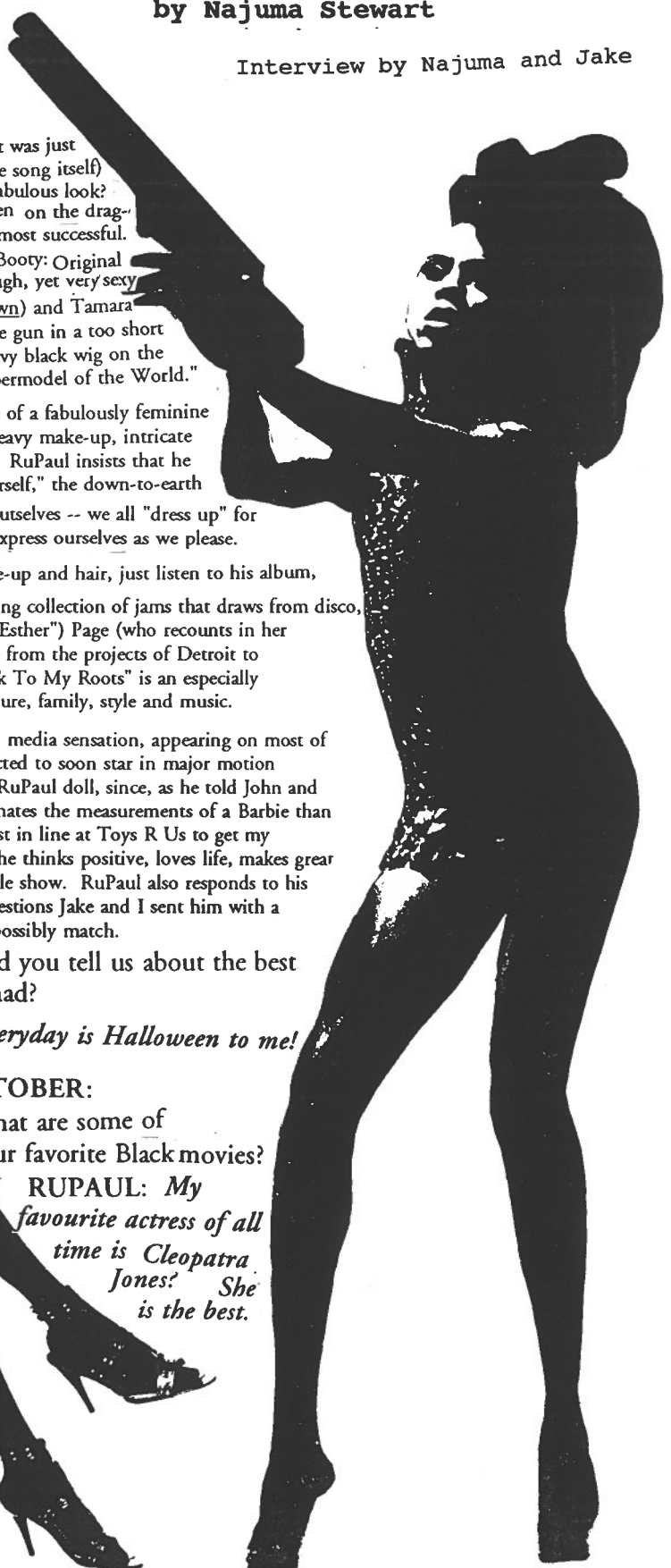
ROCTOBER:

What are some of your favorite Black movies?

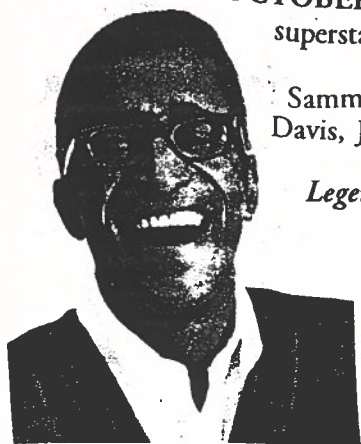
RUPAUL: *My favourite actress of all time is Cleopatra Jones. She is the best.*

ROCTOBER: Speaking of films, when are you going to make a movie, I (Najuma) love the part in the song "Star Booty" when you say "Star Booty-The Motion Picture".

RUPAUL: *I have been in the motion picture industry for years! I have starred in several classic cult underground movies! Anyway, currently we are working on several Hollywood possibilities. My people are talking And were aiming for a major film to be lensed sometime next year.*



ROCTOBER: Can we get a quick opinion from you on some of your fellow superstars?



Sammy Davis, Jr.:  
*Legend.*

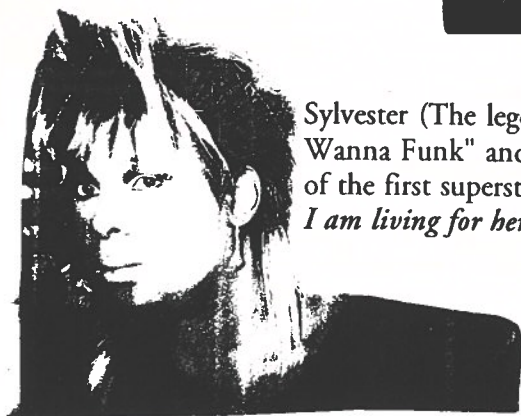
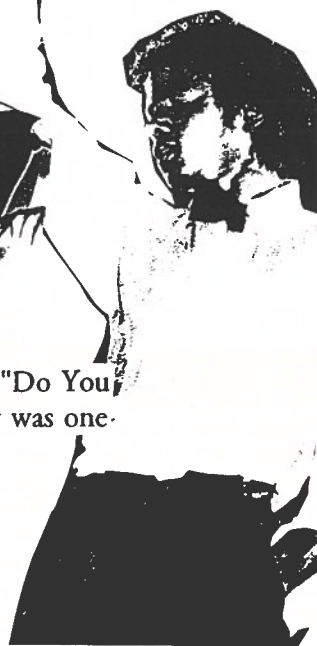


Madonna:  
*Now there's a real drag queen!*



The band KISS:  
*Whatever turns you on.*

Michael Jackson:  
*I love him.  
He is the best!!!*



Sylvester (The legendary transvestite Disco Queen whose megahits include "Do You Wanna Funk" and "You Make Me Feel (Mighty Real).") This Ultra-Beauty was one of the first superstars to die of AIDS.):  
*I am living for her.*

ROCTOBER: Do any of your special fashion accoutrements hurt to wear?

RUPAUL: *Face it. Fashion hurts. And the more painful it is the better you look!*

ROCTOBER: The last line of your Star Booty album is "Believe in yourself and you'll be a star." That's very inspiring. Have you lived by this?

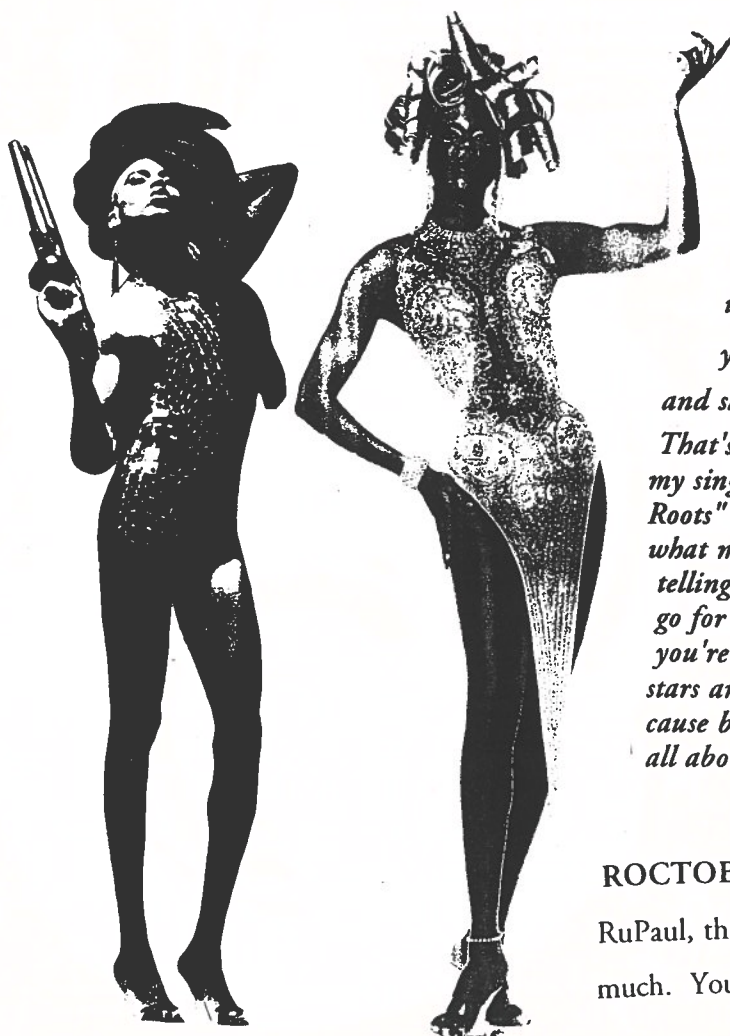
RUPAUL:  
*My mama,  
Miss Ernestine  
Charles has  
always said,  
in yourself and  
you'll be a star"*

*and she was right.*

*That's why I dedicated  
my single "Back To My  
Roots" to her. And that's  
what my life is all about,  
telling all the children to  
go for it, no matter where  
you're coming from, shoot for the  
stars and live for your dream,  
cause baby that's what life is  
all about. Okay? Okay!*

# RuPaul

*You Better*



ROCTOBER:

RuPaul, thank you very much. You are *truly* fabulous.





BRUCE FRANKLIN

The Farmers are my neighborhoods' band. A true Hyde Park band, a true Southside of Chicago band and a truly great band. Their three LPs "Flames of Love", "Rock Angel" and "Volcano" are excellent examples of their appealing style of scaled down, simple Rock and Roll that takes elements from 50's Rockabilly, 60's Pop, 70's and 80's Punk and 90's Indie rock, but blends it all with intense (if that adjective can be applied to these nouns) innocence and sincerity. Though they have never been big outside of this city, they have always enjoyed club success in Chicago (and their fans enjoy the shows) and when I talked to them they had just completed recording "Sand", the album that they felt might break them on the National scene. Core members Paul Crayton and Bruce Franklin (who have played with a parade of other Farmers over the years) discussed their art and relationship with such incredible confidence, at one point after the interview while listening to the "Sand" demo Bruce even referred to them as "two guys on the same defensive line working together", that it made it an incredible surprise when I heard a few days after the interview that The Farmers had broken up. Actually the band was still playing, but without Bruce. Marcus Shaffer went back and did a follow up interview. Again the confidence of Paul Crayton in discussing his Rock work was remarkable. Here are both interviews...

Jake Austen: When did the Farmers start?

Bruce: March of 1987

J: With Joe Lucas on drums?

Paul: Yeah.

J: What band's were you in before?

B: You were in three bands, right Paul?

P: Dambuilders, Bluenotes and Mr. Potato Head.

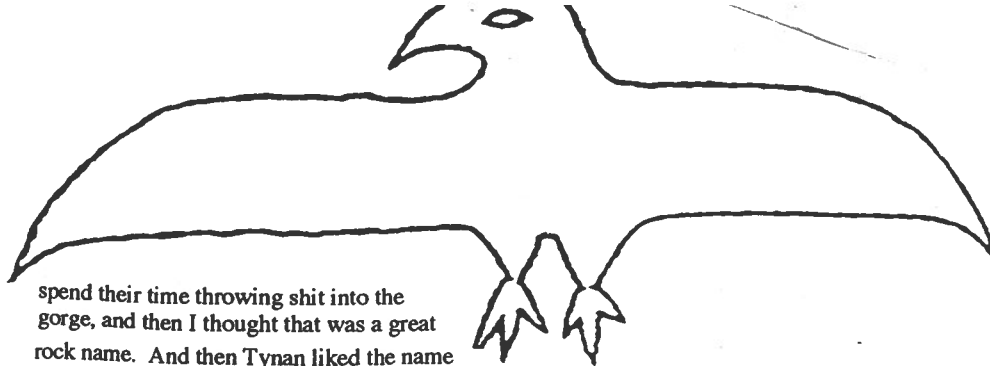
J: What was an early Farmers gig like?

P: From the start we had a good buzz.

B: The Dambuilders were a decent band. They weren't that well known, but they had a Hyde Park following.

J: Tell me about your relationship with the East coast Indie Punk band The Dambuilders.

P: I thought of the name The Dambuilders because Joe and his friend Tynan used to



spend their time throwing shit into the gorge, and then I thought that was a great rock name. And then Tynan liked the name so much that...

B: There was a band that started up, right?

P: Right, and he was in it, and Joe gave him permission to use the name, which is kind of weak. They should have thought up their own name.

J: The way I always saw the Farmers, you guys are doing the kind of songs-they're love songs-like pop radio songs, positive and pretty, but your attitude, the way you're going about it, so raw and spare, it seems so much more intense. What's your take on The Farmers?

B: I'd say we make good make out music.

Also I think the Farmers is a band that actually contained personnel and have a kind of musical sense, or gifts that's as special as anything that's timeless. We're not just average Joes, I think we actually are talented, you know?

J: What's your take then on the fact that you guys are...

P: Small time?

J: Not small time in a terrible way...

B: Exactly. Were more like guys doing something that's really good and it might be equivalent to anything that's not recognized right at this moment, but is really vital.

P: the only reason that we are not big time...

B: Yet.

P: ...is that we haven't put the energy into it. We always knew that if we did what we were doing...

B: Like the Grateful Dead...

P: We never felt that we were off schedule. We've always had an idea where we're going to be.

B: It'll be natural too, just like Springsteen did because of a grassroots following, same with the Farmers. I have complete confidence that...even years from now...I don't care if we're big now or later. People go back and say, even Punk rockers, will look at Blues stuff from years ago, Jazz stuff and think "This guy's fantastic," and that guy might have been a carnival guy. It's just the kind of thing where you feel about the music.

J: Farmers, what is the crop you've farmed?

B: I would say we're still trying to get it to grow, sowing it and reaping it.

But I would say Human Philosophy.

P: I would say we've laid the basis and structure but I would say...

J: You haven't planted yet?

P: Yeah, but that's not important, the important thing is that the foundation is laid for growing.

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Marcus: It's been a couple of weeks since the first part of this interview with Jake Austen. Since then a lot has happened. I think that we should start by maybe setting the record straight for the Roctober readers about the status of the Farmers and maybe well talk a little more about *your* status as a Rock and Roller.



Paul: Um, well as a lot of people know, Bruce isn't playing with the Farmers right now. He just... I think he needs to figure out how much he really wants to do it, because you can't be half hearted about it, like, I don't want to play with him until he knows exactly what he wants to do.

M: Yesterday you mentioned to me your enthusiasm for one of your other projects, The Spirits. I think you even told me "The Spirits are where it's at" and you got a look in your eye...tell us about it.

P: Well the Farmers are a real intense and specific thing, it's a really great thing for Rock and Roll. It's not everything to me, it's not everything a band can be.

M: Is Rock and Roll everything to you?

P: Yes, just about. The thing about the Farmers is it's a really, really fun thing, and it's neat to be in a fun band, but, like, the Spirits is a more serious thing. It can be

viewed as a more intense music thing, and the Farmers is more like...

M: A Rock and Roll picture.

P: Exactly, a Rock and Roll picture.

M: I think the Farmers are one of the best examples of that. Everything can be dissected. You can look at the pictures on the covers for instance, you can read the lyrics or listen to them, and the sound and

everything...it's one of the best Rock and Roll formulas going today, or at least some of your first recordings are. Some of the secrets of Rock and Roll are really employed on your record making.

P: The Farmers are really on something that's...essential. It should be a really big thing. I should be a millionaire. It's just that it's not that big a market for it.

M: I was thinking last night when we went to see Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet, that rocking Rockabilly/Garage band, the fans there were so diverse and so full of appreciation that it was mindboggling. The headbangers and scenemakers and everyone was getting the same vibe from this band and really participating, and I was thinking how the Farmers were a band with such a following here in Chicago, and the market may have only been in audience participation. Your band really busted the bank on how much a band can be appreciated, here in Chicago.

P: Oh yeah, and I definitely don't feel like one of those guys whose bitter because he hasn't had the kind of success he deserves. The Farmers have been a total success.

M: So it's not about burning bridges and it's not about missing the boat either.

P: Neither. And if the Farmers didn't play another show or didn't make another record that would be fine, because we totally made our mark. What I'm gonna do with the Farmers is I'm gonna play some shows in Chicago and try to pay off some recording debts, and I want to put out a greatest hits record.

M: All Right!

P: "The Farmers Greatest Hits".

M: What's going to happen to the demo for "Sand"?

P: I'm not sure. It might be included on the CD. "The Farmers Greatest Hits plus Sand". "Sand" is really short, it's only like 20 minutes.

M: It seems like the Farmers are such an outlet for a philosophy. Even if your life doesn't really reflect those things. Even if you can't be the "Mr. Romance" The Farmers represent or the Do The Right Thing, that the Farmers represent, it's still the expression of a set of values that I think is very closely tied with Rock and Roll.

P: Definitely. There's always been an innocence



PAUL CRAYTON



to the Farmers. We were doing what was true to ourselves and the teenage side of us, and that's a good thing.

M: Paul, why do you like Rock and Roll so much?

P: Rock and Roll is totally high energy music and it's fun and it's totally American and it's youth music, and all that's a part of me. And it's really athletic music, and I'm into sports.

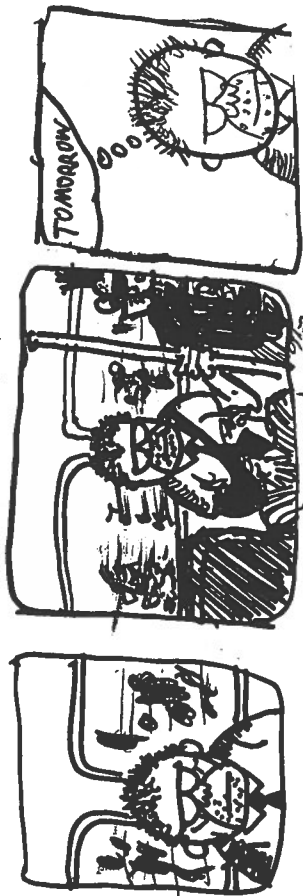
M: A couple of days ago we were sitting around in Roctober listening to "The Way I Walk" by the Cramps and just thinking about the ancestry of that song to a Farmers song. Matching all the right elements.

P: That's so true. That song, "The Way I Walk", the words are so intense, "The way I walk is just the way I walk". I mean, it seems so simple, just like the Farmers, but it says so much.

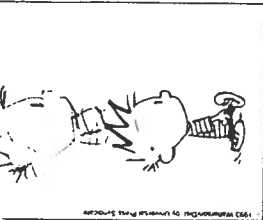
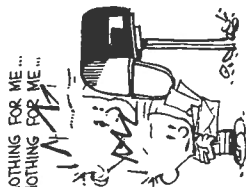
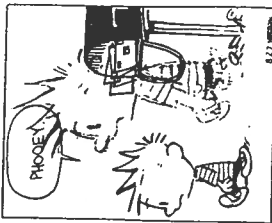
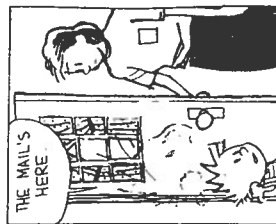
M: There is so much sincerity that it's unmistakable. There's no trying to fool an audience with those lyrics.

P: No, it's so genuine. And the comparisons of that to the Farmers is so appropriate, because the Farmers are just about being yourself, and being the best with what you have, and not trying to be anything different. The Farmers walk the way they walk.

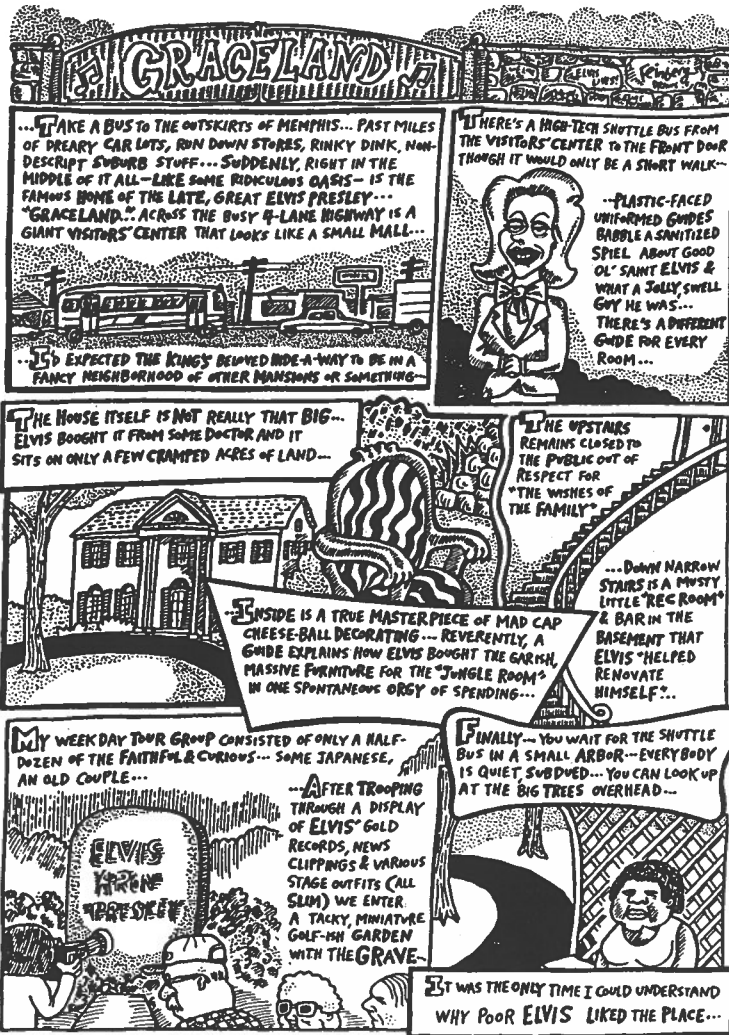




By Eric Nix



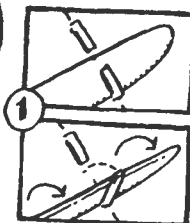
SALVIN AND HOBBS by Ben Stone and B. Watterson



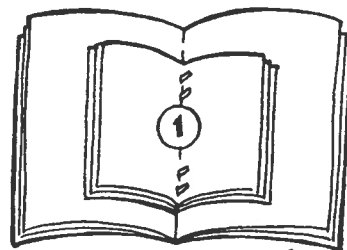
# HEY KIDS! HERE'S YOUR SPECIAL OCTOBER BONUS BOOK®!



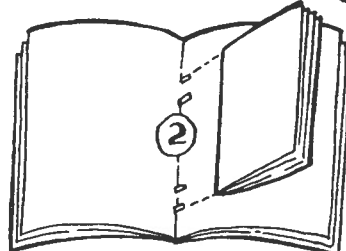
JUST FOLLOW THESE FOUR EASY STEPS!



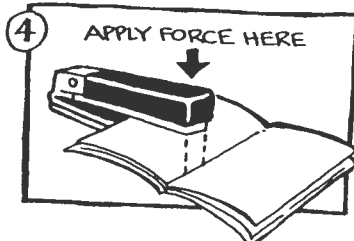
**STEP ONE (1)**  
Carefully bend up ends of staples using a butter knife.



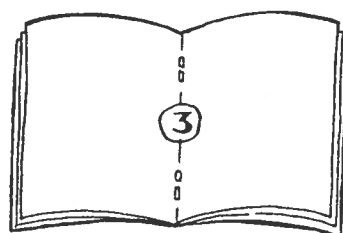
**STEP TWO (2)**  
Gently lift out your Roctober Bonus Book®.

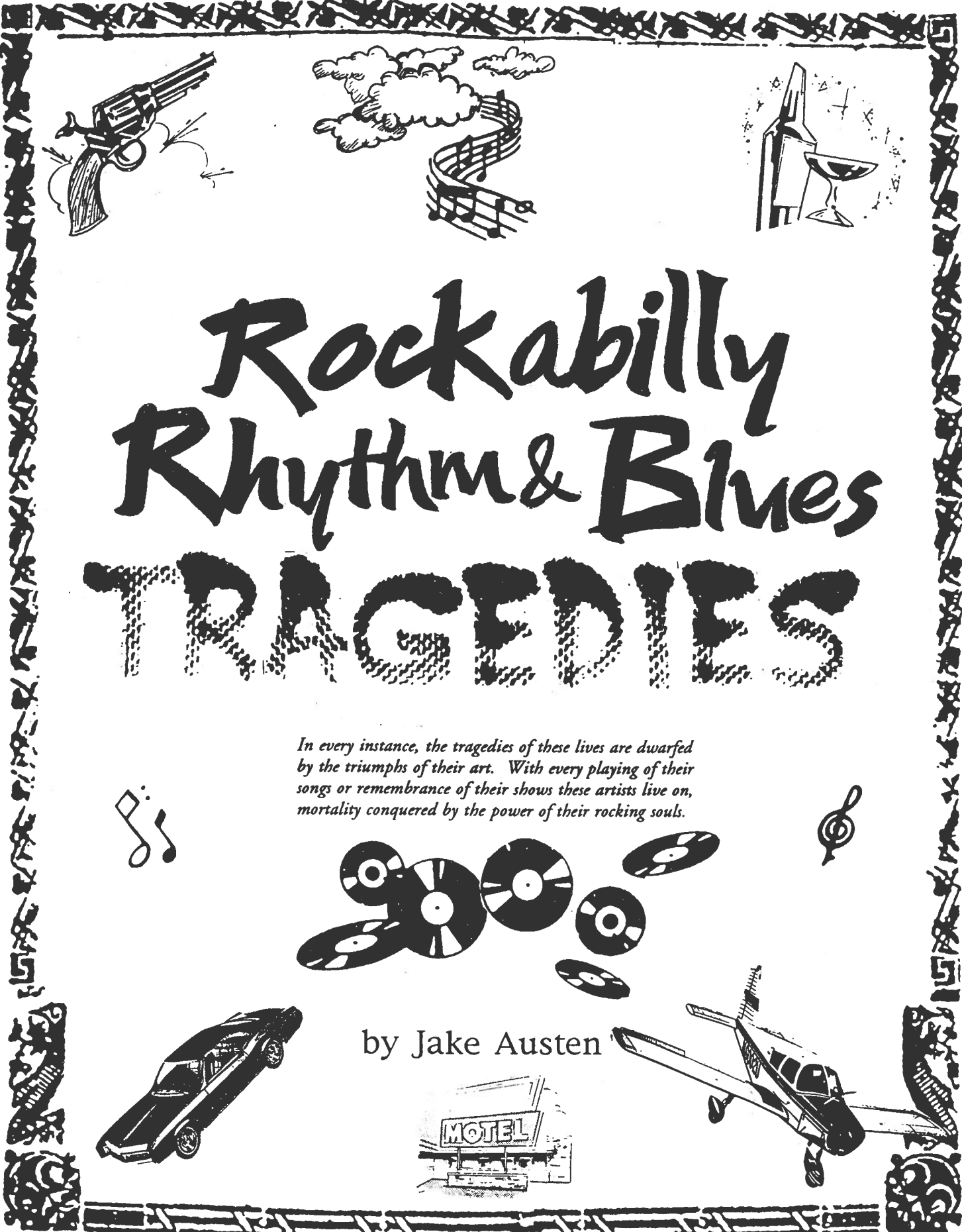


**STEP THREE (3)**  
Rebend staples to pre-serve Roctober's collectability and resale value!



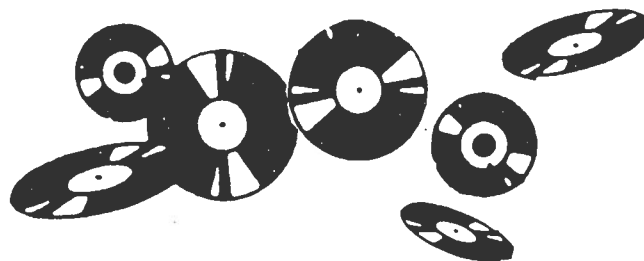
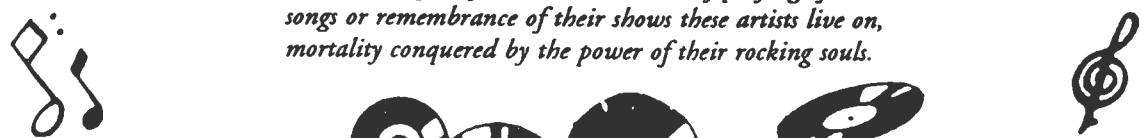
**STEP FOUR (4)**  
Rebind your Bonus Book® using a common household stapler.  
**Note:** Do NOT use a staple gun!



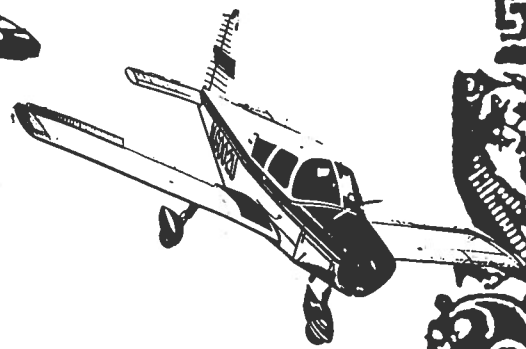
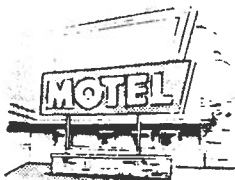
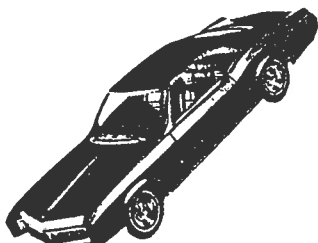


# Rockabilly Rhythm & Blues TRAGEDIES

*In every instance, the tragedies of these lives are dwarfed by the triumphs of their art. With every playing of their songs or remembrance of their shows these artists live on, mortality conquered by the power of their rocking souls.*

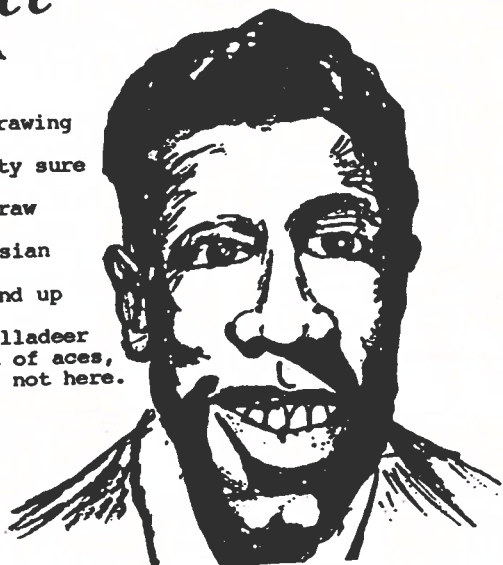


by Jake Austen



## Ace Johnny

If you're drawing  
aces,  
it's a pretty sure  
bet  
But never draw  
a trigger  
playing Russian  
Roulette  
Or you'll end up  
like that  
baritone balladeer  
Who ran out of aces,  
so now he's not here.



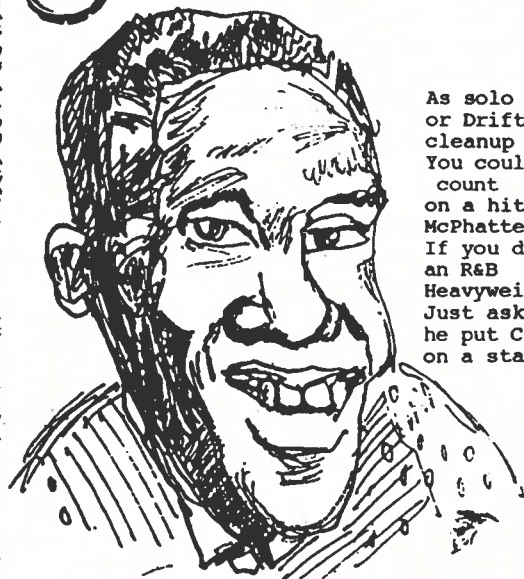
Ace (1929-54)'s suave style and soothing arrangements, along the lines of Nat "King" Cole, made him a tremendously popular soul crooner. He accidentally shot himself playing Russian Roulette just before he was scheduled to perform at the Houston City Auditorium Christmas Eve. SONGS: "Pledging My Love", "My Song", "I'm Crazy Baby"

## Buddy Holly



Holly (1938-59) looked like Clark Kent, but he was a rockin' Superman, writing some of the most important chapters of early Rock and Roll. When his plane crashed, Rock's greatest chirping, hiccuping voice was silenced. SONGS: "Not Fade Away", "Rave On", "That'll Be The Day", "Peggy Sue"

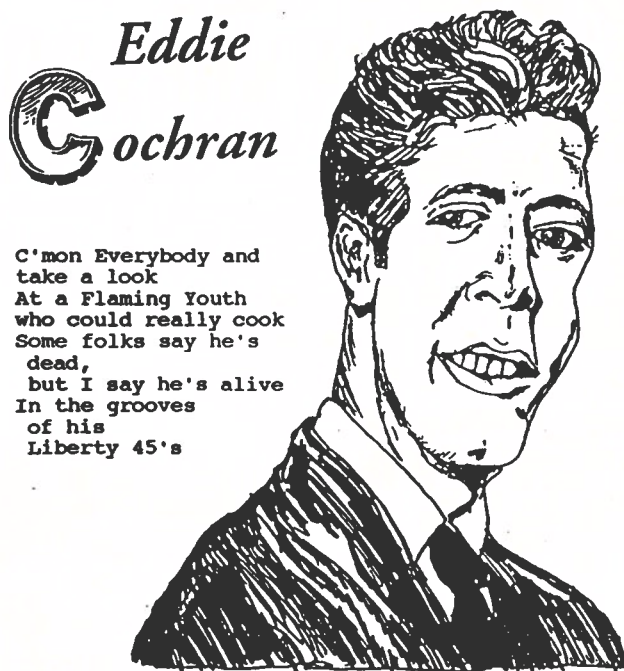
## Clyde McPhatter



As solo giant  
or Drifters  
cleanup batter  
You could always  
count  
on a hit from  
McPhatter  
If you doubt he's  
an R&B  
Heavyweight champ  
Just ask Uncle Sam,  
he put Clyde  
on a stamp

McPhatter (1932-72) as featured tenor in the popular group The Dominoes and legendary group The Drifters sang smashes like "Have Mercy Baby" and "Money Honey", but he spent most of his career as a solo artist, and is very responsible for widening R & B's appeal beyond it's core audience. Alcoholism contributed to his death, officially by heart attack. SONGS: "A Lover's Question", "Lover Please"

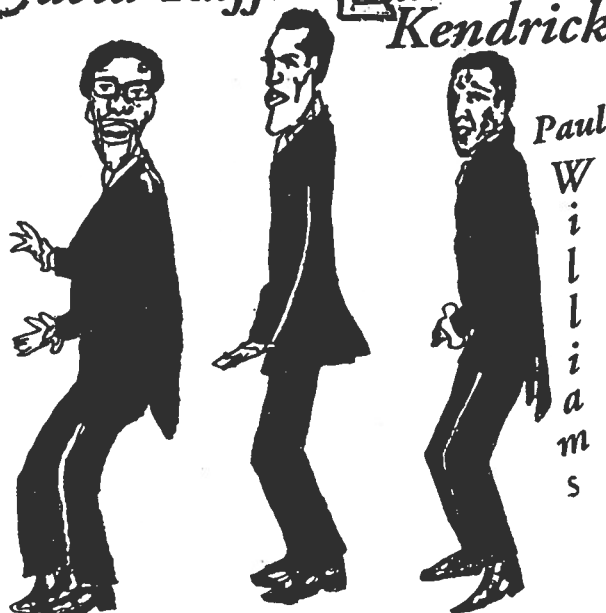
## Eddie Cochran



C'mon Everybody and  
take a look  
At a Flaming Youth  
who could really cook  
Some folks say he's  
dead,  
but I say he's alive  
In the grooves  
of his  
Liberty 45's

When Cochran (1938-60) died in a car crash near London he was already an accomplished studio musician, he owned three hit records, he'd been in Rock and Roll movies and he was as big in England as Elvis. And he was only 21 years old. As it is, he's a legend, had he lived he may have been a challenger to the throne. Songs: "Sittin' in the Balcony", "C'mon Everybody", "Summertime Blues", "Cottonpicker"

## David Ruffin **E**ddie Kendricks



Paul  
W  
i  
l  
l  
i  
a  
m  
s

Temptations. Not only the super star group in the Motown galaxy, but also the things that brought down three of it's brightest members. (L to R) Ruffin (1941-93), an intense dynamic singer succumbed to the temptations of drugs, Kendricks (1939-92), of the spine tingling falsetto, died of lung cancer after decades of smoking. Williams (1939-73) gave in to alcohol. SONGS: "My Girl", "Get Ready"

## **F**lorence Ballard



Diana Ross

Had to be the boss  
And she didn't care  
Who's life it cost

Ballard (1943-76), Diana Ross and Mary Wilson were childhood friends who became the most popular of all the girl groups, The Supremes. A rivalry with Ross, who had certain powers over Motown boss Berry Gordy, caused Ballard's ousting from the group. When she died of a heart attack she was in extreme poverty. When Ross arrived at her funeral she was booed. SONGS: "Stop In The Name of Love", "Baby Love"

## Marvin

**G**aye

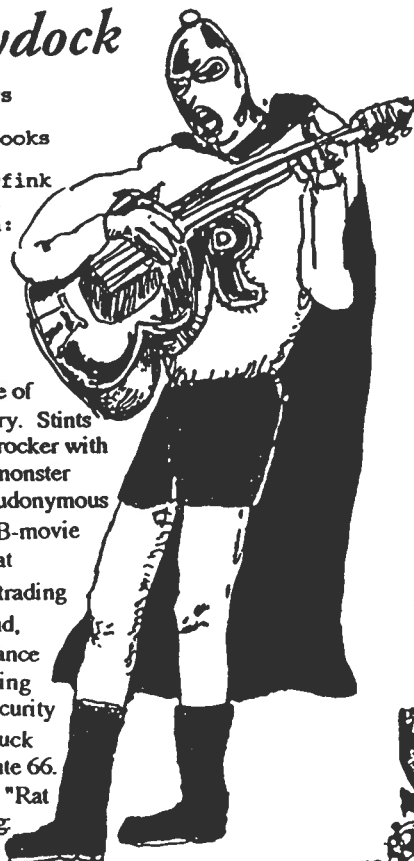


Marvin Gaye (1939-83) stands as perhaps the greatest soul singer ever. A genius of vocal style and of recording technique (his overdubbing on his landmark LP "What's Going On" and all subsequent releases was brilliant.) the mindbogglingly awesome recordings he left behind are testament to his greatness. Sadly, Gaye's deep and troubled soul brought about his death when his drug addictions helped force his semi-deranged father's hand into the shooting of his son. SONGS: "Let's Get It On", "I'll Be Doggone", "Sexual Healing" Suggested Reading: "Divided Soul" by David Ritz

## Ron **H**aydock

Records and monsters  
and B-Movie flicks  
Paperback "trash" books  
and "99 Chicks"  
Ski masks and Rat Pfink  
and bubblegum cards  
All this is America:  
Ron Haydock,  
it's star!

Haydock (1940-77)  
lived perhaps the  
greatest Rock and Roll life of  
American culture in history. Stints  
as a Gene Vincent-esque rocker with  
his Boppers combo, as a monster  
magazine editor, as a pseudonymous  
"adult" book writer, as a B-movie  
star (pictured here in "Rat  
Pfink A Boo Boo), as a trading  
card text writer and beyond,  
Haydock spread his brilliance  
around the country during  
his life of troubled obscurity  
until he was fatally struck  
by an 18 wheeler on route 66.  
SONGS: "99 Chicks", "Rat  
Pfink" Suggested reading:  
Kicks magazine #7.





O'Kelly  
Isley

Isley (1937-86) and his brothers stand as the most enduring group in pop history. From "Shout" in '59 to their hits of the seventies, including "Fight The Power" to their recording and performing career of today the Isley Brothers have always been players in Rock history. Kelly died of a heart attack but his brothers believe his spirit is with them, channeled through frequent collaborator Angela Winbush.

Jackie  
Wilson



Wilson (1934-84), one of the kings of R & B, sold millions of records, including such smashes as "Lonely Teardrops" (peened by Berry Gordy, who launched Motown with the royalties), and "Doggin' Around", but his legendary powers were not as a recording artist, but as a live performer. His frantic dancing, splits, flips and spins have inspired countless others, including Michael Jackson and Bobby Brown. During one of these shows he suffered a heart attack and never came out of his semi-coma in the years until his transition.

Johnny  
Burnette



Johnny went to Catholic school  
Elvis went to Humes  
Johnny waved at Elvis  
when he rode his bike to school  
Johnny went to Rockin' heaven  
when he sunk  
instead of swimmied  
13 years later "E"  
checked in  
And Johnny waved  
at him

The  
King



Burnette (1934-64)

and his brother  
Dorsey were Rock-  
abilly pioneers. He died  
in a boating accident. SONGS:

"Trains Kept a Rollin' ", "You're 16". Elvis Presley (1935-77),  
"The King". The first real and biggest ever Rock and Roll star  
went from Rockabilly sex machine to movie star to pop vocalist/  
Country singer. He died of heart failure, partially due to prescrip-  
tion drug abuse, in his home, Graceland. SONGS: "Mystery Train",  
"Are You Lonesome Tonight", "Suspicious Minds"

Frankie

L  
y  
m  
o  
n



With The Teenagers, Lymon (1942-68) was a part of the greatest of all Doo Wop groups, or at least the group with the highest hit to miss ratio. But the voice of innocence and joy that sung "I'm not a Juvenile Delinquent" and "Why Do Fool's Fall In Love" betrayed the reality of a young life plagued with problems that manifested themselves in bigamy and drug addiction. The latter took his life and the victims of the former are still fighting over his royalties.



**L**ittle  
Willie  
John

Inside John(1937-68)'s little body were some great big hits. The original "Fever", "Talk To Me, Talk To Me" and "All Around The World" featured his Gospel trained, wide ranged, rich voice. He died in prison serving time for stabbing a railroad worker.

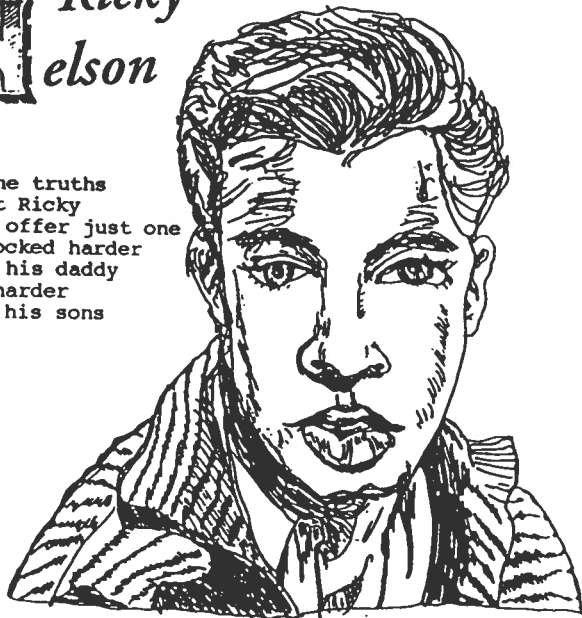


**M**ary  
Wells

The strength and clarity of Wells(1943-92)' voice made her one of Motown's first stars with hits like "My Guy", "You Beat Me To The Punch" and "Two Lovers". After leaving Motown for a fat contract elsewhere she failed to recreate earlier success. Sadly her strong voice was silenced by throat cancer, to which she eventually succumbed.

**N**icky  
Nelson

Of the truths about Ricky I'll offer just one He rocked harder than his daddy and harder than his sons



Nelson(1940-85)'s stardom and musical genes may have been inherited from his folks, Ozzie and Harriet, but his rockin' soul and pretty boy looks were all his own. From bubblegum Rockabilly ("A Teenager's Romance", "Hello Mary Lou") to his days with his Stone Canyon Band ("Garden Party") Rick never stopped believing he was born to Rock. He went out in a blaze when his plane exploded over Texas, reportedly due to a freebasing accident.

**O**tis Redding

He sold 4 million records right after he died And while they spun there were 4 billion tears cried



Redding (1941-67) was a Soul explosion waiting to happen when his plane hit icy Wisconsin waters, drowning it's passengers. Though his soulful sides in the 60's, such as "I've Been Loving You Too Long" and "Try a Little Tenderness" made him the King of Soul (as opposed to R & B), his next song "Dock of the Bay" was the cut that would have took him to the next level of Superstardom.



## Roy Orbison

Not only  
the lonely  
could  
sympathize  
With the tears  
in the music  
man's shade  
covered eyes

Orbison (1936-88), one of Sun records' posse of giants, cut excellent rocking Rockabilly songs, but made his mark with haunting, often paranoid, romantic ballads. Ironically, the pain his artistic side created descended upon him in reality years later when his wife and most of his children were killed in separate accidents. He kept himself together by constant touring, and when he died of natural causes in 1988 he had a hit album out with his group and a solo LP on the way.

SONGS: "Ooby Dooby", "Pretty Woman", "In Dreams"



## The Phantom

THE PHANYOM LIVES! But the tragedy lies in the fate of this masked wildman. Unmasked he goes by Marty Lott, and his spirit is as alive today as it was for the one and a half minutes of madness that is his 45 "Love Me", considered by many the greatest Psycho-Rockabilly side ever. Unfortunately, his body can no longer attack a guitar in the same way since he drove his car off a cliff one wild night in '66 and has been paralyzed from the neck down since. The world misses the music unmade, but sincerely, Marty we...LOVE YOU - AAAHHH! Reading: New Kommotion #23, Kicks #3.

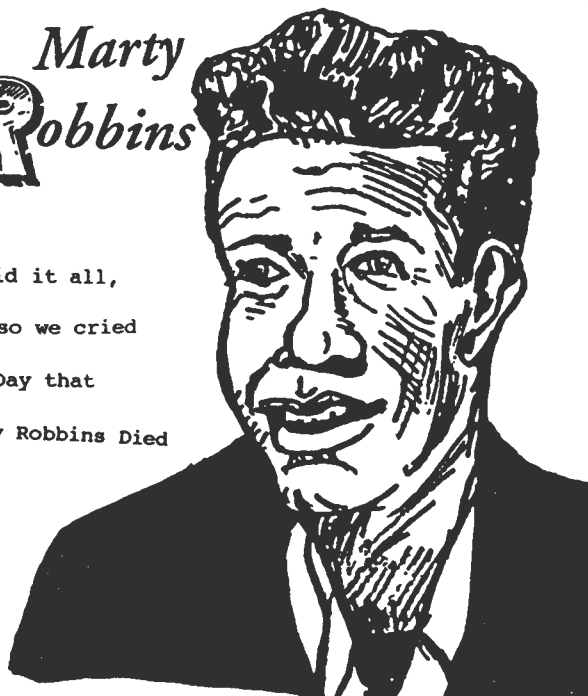


## Queen Dinah Washington

Washington (1924-63) was raised in Chicago but was known as the Queen of the Harlem Blues, because her sophisticated delivery of her divine voice was far removed from the gritty Blues associated with Chi-Town. Her string of hits seemed endless: "I Wanna Be Loved", "What A Difference A Day Makes", "Baby You Got What It Takes". Unfortunately her strings of husbands and problems also seemed to have no end until her seventh known groom found her body after she ODeed on diet pills and alcohol.

## Marty Robbins

He did it all,  
And so we cried  
The Day that  
Marty Robbins Died

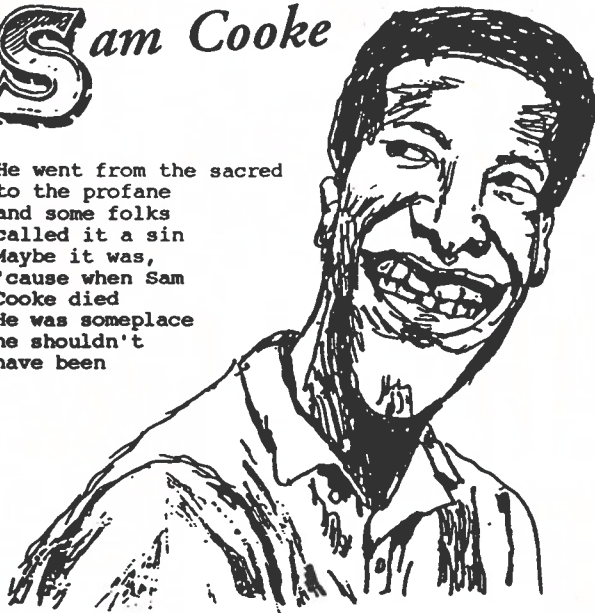


Of all the used records bin sections in Nashville, none are fatter than Marty Robbins' (1925-82) Rockabilly to Pop to Country to his classic gunfighters ballads, his incredible prolificity made him such an enigma that his too early death brought a very unique sense of loss upon the music world.

SONGS: "El Paso" "White Sport Coat and A Pink Carnation"

## Sam Cooke

He went from the sacred  
to the profane  
and some folks  
called it a sin  
Maybe it was,  
'cause when Sam  
Cooke died  
He was someplace  
he shouldn't  
have been



Sam Cooke (1935-64) was one of Gospel's brightest stars when he left the Soul Stirrers to pursue a career in secular pop music. His recording career was brilliant, and with his honest, smooth voice, excellent material and clean cut image he, as his "Best Of" liner notes say, "Lived in the Top Ten". His clean image and life, however, left him simultaneously when he was shot by a woman in a hotel room under mysterious circumstances. SONGS: "You Send Me" "Chain Gang" "If I Had A Hammer", "Cupid", "Wonderful World"

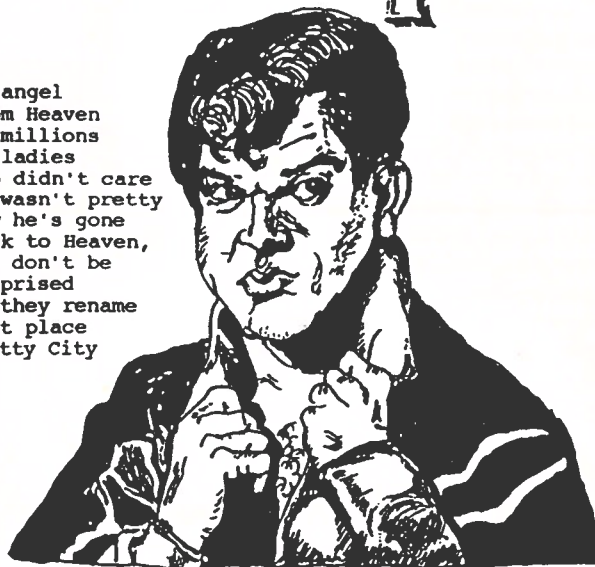
## Tammi Terrell



Terrell (1946-70) was a beautiful woman with a beautiful voice whose incredible soulful musical chemistry with Marvin Gaye is featured on such hits as "Your Precious Love" and "Ain't No Mountain High Enough". She collapsed in Gaye's arms onstage succumbing to what was called a brain tumor, but is rumored to have been a hammer blow to the head by a Motown star she was involved with (not Gaye). She died three years later.

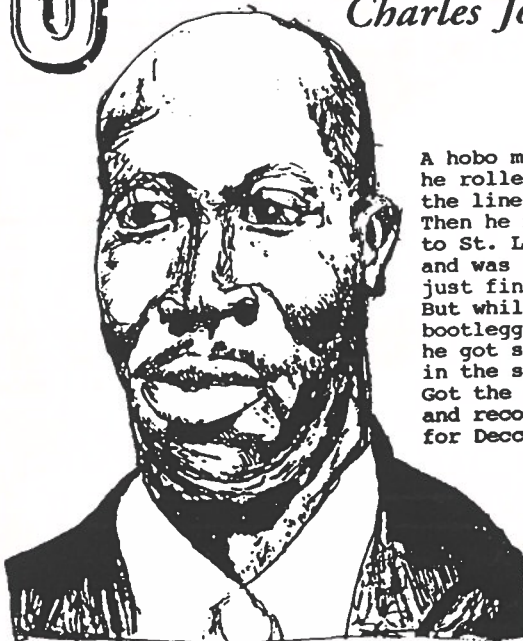
## Conway Twitty

An angel  
from Heaven  
to millions  
of ladies  
Who didn't care  
he wasn't pretty  
Now he's gone  
back to Heaven,  
and don't be  
surprised  
If they rename  
that place  
Twitty City



Twitty(1933-93)'s distinctive voice could turn top material, cookie cutter country, standards or covers into solid gold. He found greasy Rockabilly success early on, especially with the smash "It's Only Make Believe", but when he went country in 1964 the fireworks really went off, with #1 hits like "Hello Darlin'" and "Tight Fittin' Jeans" exploding one after another. He was about to release a new hit LP when he collapsed leaving stage in Branson, MO and died of a brain aneurysm.

## "Uncle Skipper" Charles Jordan

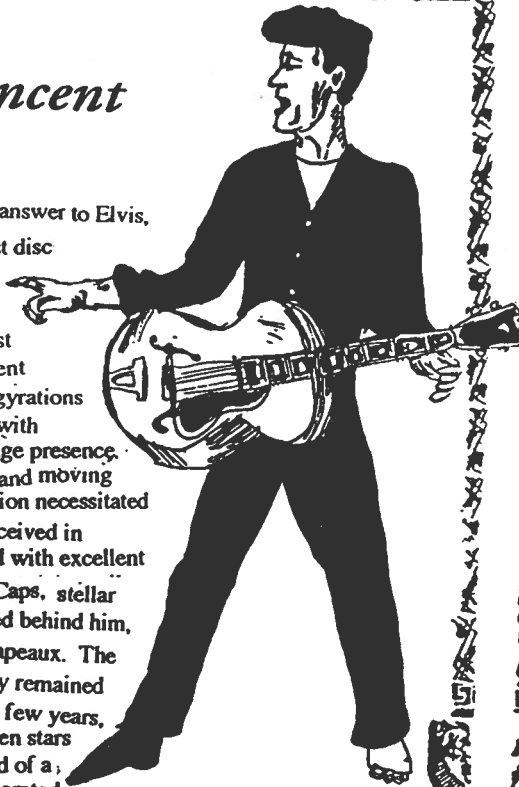


A hobo musician  
he rolled down  
the line  
Then he moved  
to St. Loo  
and was doing  
just fine  
But while  
bootlegging wine  
he got shot  
in the spine  
Got the Blues  
and recorded  
for Decca/Vocalion

Jordan (1880-1954) was a major figure in St. Louis Blues. He died of pneumonia. SONG: "Honeysucker Blues"  
Suggested Reading: "Blues Who's Who" by Sheldon Harris.

## Gene Vincent

Vincent (1935-71), signed as Capitol's answer to Elvis, hit big with his first disc "Bè-Bop-a-lu-là" and became one of Rockabilly's greatest stars. The excitement Elvis generated with gyrations Vincent challenged with his acts' dynamic stage presence. Clad in black leather and moving with a unique animation necessitated by the bum leg he received in Korea, Gene crooned with excellent voice while his Blue Caps, stellar musicians all, waited behind him, wearing apropos chapeaux. The act ROCKED! They remained popular in the US a few years, but have always been stars in the UK. He died of a bleeding ulcer accelerated by alcoholism. He is perhaps the most respected star of his genre. SONGS: "Blue Jean Bop", "Race With The Devil"



## Phillipé "Soul"

## Wynne



Wynne(1941-84)'s joyous voice and dynamic untamed presence led the Spinners on a road of hits matched by few groups for quality, including "I'll Be Around", "Mighty Love" and "Love Don't Love Nobody". After he left the group he toured with the P-Funk. He suffered a heart attack during a third encore and passed on. It's a shame.

## X-Glamour Girl Young Wolf



Two tragically underappreciated artists forced to find work off the stage. Hannah Sylvester(1900-73), "Harlem's Mae West" was a member of the X-Glamour Girls Revue in the 50's and served as treasurer in the 60's. Called "One of the least appreciated female performers." Gus "Young Wolf" Jenkins (1931-84), a Blues artist who worked with Chess, Ray Charles and others found himself usually working outside of music in his frame shop in the 60's and 70's. SONGS: "Bloodstains on the Wall", "I Ate The Wrong Part" Suggested Reading: "Blues Who's Who" by Sheldon Harris

## ZZ Hill



Hill(1940-1984) stands as a very important Blues figure if for no other reason than that at a time when a Blues revival was occurring, mostly audienced by young whites, he was one of the only artists aiming for and hitting a Black audience, live and on the radio. A Chicago favorite, his tragedy lies in the fact that he passed just when he was beginning to enjoy the success he worked so hard for.

SONGS: "Down Home Blues", "Cheating In The Next Room"



noticed the fact that we always try to put on the most action packed show we possibly can no matter how many people show up. If one guy is your fan and pays his hard earned 5 bucks to see you he deserves the full show even if he's the only one who made it to see you. When the attendance is a bit low that just makes it more like a party and less like the big Rock thing.

We always try to put on a show we ourselves would like to see. Audience participation is a major part of it. Girl Trouble doesn't feel superior just because we happen to be on stage. It takes the whole crowd to make the show successful and the audience is just as important (maybe more so) than the band. Even if one person is enjoying the show than we've done our job.



Although we can't do the really spectacular shows on the road, at home we like to put on special theme and holiday shows. On Valentine's Day the guys performed in heart patterned boxer shorts, Kurt jumped through a heart hoop and performed a choreographed dance routine with two Go-Go girls. Another time we purchased about 15 pillows, tossed them out and had a huge pillow fight with the crowd. We like to see how people react to this type of stunt.

**ROCTOBER:** Because of your name, I guess, a couple of people I know thought your name associated you with the Riot Grrrl stuff, but I explained that it probably was a reference to the Elvis film "The Trouble With Girls". Could you clear up the mystery of your name?

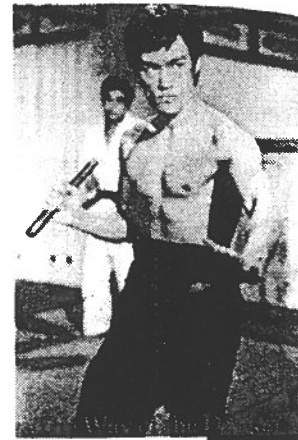
**BON:** Since we formed in 1984, well before anybody had ever thought up the Riot Grrrl thing, we are surprised that some people would think we had anything to do with this recent movement. There really isn't any

where we picked up the name. A 50's movie poster claimed some teen had girl trouble, Beave told Wally the worst kind of trouble was girl trouble, Elvis had the "Trouble with Girls" movie and there's a paperback novel called "Girl Trouble". Basically we just made a list of about 50 possible names and picked one. We actually used a few others before Girl Trouble, but we won't divulge what they were.

**ROCTOBER:** Could you tell us about the greatest Halloween you ever had?

**BON:** I took Kahuna out trick or treating one year and he fell off every step he got up on. He didn't seem to mind. Kurt claims he was Robin to his older brother Karl's Batman. Every other memory is a blur of Sugar Daddies and Smarties.

**ROCTOBER:** Do you think the genre of Rockabilly (Surf and Garage included) is on the rise, or is it an illusion caused by a glut of 7"s?



BRUCE LEE

Granny  
Go-Go



**BON:** It's hard to say what genre is on the rise these days. Right now the Garage thing

is big in the Northwest (but that usually means by the time it's popular everywhere it's on the way out). We are glad when any form of dance music is on the rise but we don't have a clue as to what's happening.

**ROCTOBER:** If you couldn't be rockers what would be your #2 dream job?

**BON:** Dale-Dog Trainer

Bon-Forest Ranger

Kurt-Repo Man-(already fulfilling this dream job)

**ROCTOBER:** Kahuna-Sci-Fi Special Effects Expert  
Who's going to win the World Series?

**BON:** Washington Senators.

**ROCTOBER:** My friends Boss Fuel played with you in Providence and said the show was packed and incredible. Can you tell me about the rest of the tour?

**BON:** The tour went great. Of course meeting and playing with Boss Fuel in Providence was a highlight. They are a fabulous band

PO Box 12034  
Seattle, WA 98102  
Tel 206-623-5250  
Fax 623-5279  
Booking (206) 125-6246

you'll be hearing from soon. And we got to hang out with them and watch videos after the gig.

We packed a lot into 5 and a half weeks and there's so much to tell. Part of the trip we got to travel with one of our fave bands PopDefect who we've been close friends with for many years. Be sure to watch the documentary about them called "Live With This" if it ever comes to your town. It's incredible. We thought maybe PopDefect would get sick of us but they didn't seem to (at least they kept it to themselves if they were). Then we drove up and hooked up with the amazing Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet who's records I'm sure you all own by now. The Shadowy Men were the perfect hosts as we played in Canada and Toronto for two nights. Then we came to the U.S. and our three bands played together in Buffalo, Philadelphia and New York. It was really great hanging out with bands who are so good but act so normal and fun-Rock like. It's refreshing to meet really great bands who don't have swelled heads, especially since we met mediocre bands who think they are the most fantastic thing that ever got on stage.

During our visit to New York we decided to finally check out Coney Island which I've been wanting to do for years. It was definitely worth the wait. We got to see the old Thunderbolt rollercoaster, check out the Wonder Wheel and ride the Cyclone rollercoaster which we highly recommend to anyone. Native New Yorkers tell us we missed some of the highlights but we were totally satisfied with the whole experience. I hope they don't tear down the Thunderbolt. It should just naturally sink into the ground gracefully.

When we had to say goodbye to Shadowy Men and PopDefect (and Dave our tour boss) in Washington, DC it was tough. Suddenly we were back to the four of us. But we met the Woggles and played with them in Athens, GA. and had a memorable show in Tuscaloosa, AL. In Houston we got to see our old replacement singer David Duet (who filled in for a year when Kurt Kendall stupidly quit Girl Trouble). David is doing well and fronts a Houston band called Dashboard Mary. Danny Flaim, who manages Emo's the club we played at in Houston showed us fabulous sites like the beer can house. We were impressed.

All the shows seemed to go pretty well except for Washington, DC where there were 50 people attending the 7:00 PM poetry reading and 20 people attending the 9:30 Girl Trouble/PopDefect show, and Austin where the audience left (the G.T. tour smell must have really been prevalent for this last show).

**ROCTOBER:** Has your alter ego as a zine maker helped keep the band together through hard times, or has the extra work been rougher on the Pro Rock scene?

**BON:** At first "Wig Out!" kept us together

because shows were few and far between. It gave us a big project to do in those frequent down times and we could see our name in print just like the big bands (even if we did print it ourselves!). It was a fun project that at first people gave us a hard time over ("how dare they shamelessly promote themselves?" and "magazines without serious political content are useless") but they later started to enjoy it. It sort of took on a life of it's own and people started to ask when the next one would be out. That was fine until we got more gigs and started devoting our extra time to records. Then we'd tell people not to ask about the next "Wig Out!".

Now we are lucky if we can manage to get two a year out. In the early days we put out four per year. So far we've made 21 issues, and I think that's not bad for a sparetime project. "Wig Out!" is a habit that we haven't been able to kick yet.

**ROCTOBER:** What's your theory about the death of Brandon Lee?

**BON:** I think if we had a theory we wouldn't be smart to be sharing it with others. When David Duet was in Girl Trouble we would have wild parties at his house in Seattle and then jump over the fence and run into the graveyard and visit Bruce Lee's grave. People leave things for Bruce like money, photos and numchuks. Brandon was buried right across from Bruce Lee. Bruce was supposed to return to earth in 1984 but he didn't. Maybe they'll both return in 1994. I hope so.

**ROCTOBER:** Finally, what words do you want to send out to your fans and followers? What would you like Roctober readers to know?

**BON:** We'd better say that we have a new album out called "New American Shame" on the eMpTy label that we hope people will purchase. It is our third album and if this one doesn't go anywhere we will be taking everyone's advice and trading the in the instruments for garden maintenance equipment. Other than that we send greetings from T-town to all the Rocktober readers. We hope that if we play Chicago again more people than 30 will show up, and until then everyone should be listening to lots of Wilson Pickett, George Jones and Frank Sinatra records.



# IN THE JUNGLE, BABE:

## Charles Wright & the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band

Nice to see that we're in the midst of a 70's funk revival, as it were. Everybody who is anybody is giving credit to James Brown, the Ohio Players, and George Clinton. The Meters are close behind, and right now there's a cult of jazz-funk fans keeping the music of Roy Ayers and Johnny "Hammond" Smith alive. However, Charles Wright & the Watts 103rd St. Rhythm Band were one of the first, best, weirdest (that's a compliment) and consistently chart-topping groups from this revered phase of R&B, yet no one seems to talk about this group much in retrospect. "Love Land" and "Express Yourself", just two of their many hits, still get played on dusties radio stations (at least in Chicago), they've been sampled a few times, and they left behind five Warner Bros. albums, released between 1968 and 1971, that range from brilliant to uneven. Yet with all this evidence of their existence, few rock & soul reference books note their passing. The second edition of *The Rolling Stone Illustrated History Of Rock & Roll* (1980) has a chapter on funk that briefly mentions them before getting them out of the way to discuss the P-Funk empire, Kool & the Gang, and other better-known funk giants at greater length. *The Illustrated History of Black Music* (1983) pays modest lip service. Warner Bros., a record company not known for looking back and reissuing old stuff, is planning a best-of compilation on these guys that should be out by the time you read this. If the Watts Band wasn't present at the birth of funk, then they were damn sure pacing the halls!!

From what little information I've gathered, the Watts Band were a loose-knit aggregation of L.A. session musicians who originally got together as the Soul Runners in the mid-60's, scoring a soul hit with "Grits & Cornbread" on the Mo Soul label (1967). Somewhere around this time, Bill Cosby discovered them and soon they played backup on *Silver Throat* and *Hooray For The Salvation Army Band*, two very goofy albums on



**CHARLES WRIGHT**  
Aries, Lead and Inspiration

Warners that had Cosby making a half-serious attempt at singing. It was Cosby's idea to change their name to the Watts 103rd St. Rhythm Band, probably a bold move in the wake of the then-current Watts riots. Under this name, they had another R&B hit on the Keyman label, a fine piano-led instrumental thing called "Spreadin' Honey" that got them an appearance on TV's *American Bandstand*. The mighty influence of Cosby got them a contract with Warners the following year. I have yet to hear their first self-



**JAMES GADSON**  
Gemini, Humor  
(He sang "Love Land")

by James Porter

titled LP in its' entirety, but judging from the one single from the album that I have ("Caesar's Palace" b/w "Brown Sugar") and the reaction of someone I know who has the album, i was competent, if unspectacular, instrumental soul. It wasn't until early 1969 when their sound really jelled with the *Together* album, which was mostly recorded live at an L.A. club called the Haunted House (some studio cuts were thrown in here and there for good measure). The album is top heavy with instrumentals but with a pronounced funk influence, and there are some vocals thrown in. The Watts Band rips their way through standards like "Get Ready", "Knock On Wood" and "Stormy Monday" (probably one of the few versions of this overdone song I can stand these days), but buried at the very end of the album was "Do Your Thing", which was truly a sign of things to come. This oddball funk jam session is beyond belief: the instruments come in one by one, and guitarist Charles Wright, in the hoarsest voice possible, cuts loose with some off-key scat singing ("ha'mercy", "in the jungle, babe"), after which the band (minus the horn section) gets into this ferocious guitar jam that ends the record. The whole thing sounds like something the band did to warm themselves up before a soundcheck, it would be hard to imagine somebody dancing to this at some house party, and it's hard to believe that something this loose and unconventional could be a hit (Top 20 pop and soul). Must have sounded pretty spaced-out on AM radio next to the Archies, Glen Campbell, and the 1910 Fruitgum Co.! Truly a classic. The previous Watts Band LP had no pictures of the band on the cover (although Fred Smith, their producer, is pictured on the back), and *Together* almost suffered the same fate. The first pressings of the cover had this insane cartoon of dancing musical notes (don't forget, Warners also gave you, through their film division, those great "Looney Tunes" and "Merrie Melodies" cartoons, and while this was fine for neglected comedy greats---seriously!---like Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig, it



**JOHN RAYFORD**  
Aquarius, Enthusiasm



**MELVIN DUNLAP**  
Gemini, Steadiness



**BILL CANNON**  
Pisces, Sensitivity

looked pretty odd for a gritty, almost-experimental funk band from Watts!), and on the back, a nice B&W photo of the group, decked out in their matching white suits. After "Do Your Thing" took off, the front cover was quickly pulled in favor of a full-color shot of the band standing around what looks like a room in a museum, looking cool as cucumbers and confident as hell, like eight guys who just *know* they're the shit! (And check out nutty, natty Charles Wright in the middle, with his green double-breasted suit, and that lopsided grin of his! In just about all the pictures I've seen of Wright, he's either cracking a smile or about to, his bandmates look fairly serious, and when I hear his hoarse voice scatting away, somehow the image of his east-to-west grin seems so.....*perfect*. It's almost as if he's mentally saying, "ain't nothin' but a party, y'all!") Also, as great as the album cover is, probably the reasons for the late-blooming group shots are (1) the various members of the band also doubled as session musicians and were probably too busy, and (2) group personnel was always in flux, so that the revised edition of *Together* has eight members pictured on the front, but nine members on the back. (The exact same thing happened with the *Express Yourself* album, but at least they were honest about it: the back cover told us that guitarist Bernard Blackman was "so new, his picture isn't even on the cover!")

Summer of '69 saw the band busy at Western Recording Studios recording their third album, to be released later in the year, titled after a catchphrase from "Do Your Thing": *In The Jungle, Babe*. The guys must have known they were on to something: this album finds them taking more chances and musically going out on a limb, without coming off as total flakes. From the gitgo, there was the album's first single, "Till You Get Enough". In the grand tradition of "I Can't Help Myself" and "It's The Same Old Song" by the Four Tops, "Get On Up" and "And Get Away" by the Esquires, and others, the Watts Band decided to follow their

up-to-then-biggest hit with something that sounded a lot like it. Where the informality of "Thing" sounded like an accident, "Enough" is just a bit more cold and calculated, like they were reading off of a recipe in a cookbook: instruments coming in one by one, hoarse scat singing, etc. Also, I'm assuming "Thing" was one of the live cuts on the *Together* LP---the song is cut off before we have a chance to hear the crowd applaud, but then the woodshed acoustics suggest that this couldn't have been recorded in some studio. "Enough" sounds a bit cleaner. On paper, these guys trying to recapture the original feeling sounds disastrous. On vinyl, it's another classic!

Ya see, there's this *evil* guitar riff, almost bluesy, that kicks the whole thing into gear. The horns get to join in on the fun this time around, and then there's the lyrical genius of Wright: "So tired of going places where everyone's uptight/Gotta see some smiling faces, starting right tonight.....don't care what's your color, whether black or white/I don't even give a damn, you know it feels so good tonight!" (Oh, those uptight sixties: the DJ copy of "Enough" alters the lyrics a little for the teenyboppers: "I don't even give a UNH....") Elsewhere on the album: "Must Be Your Thing", a minor R&B hit for the band; versions of Wilson Pickett's "I'm A Midnight Mover" and Edwin Starr's "25 Miles" taken at twice the speed of the originals; and an almost unrecognizable instrumental version of Sly & the Family Stone's "Everyday People" that has a nearly Bo Diddley-like tempo! In the jungle, indeed! The album also included the melodic "Love Land", with drummer James Gadson doing the lead vocals, giving gravel-throated Wright a rest. This was pulled from the album in early 1970, giving them another huge hit. (A minor note: with the release of the "Love Land" single, the group was now billed as Charles Wright & the Watts 103rd Street Rhythm Band. As if the same name without Wright's name up front wasn't already a mouthful!)



**YUSUF RAHMAN**  
Gemini, Trombone, Piano, and Perception



**GABRIEL FLEMINGS**  
Scorpio, Brilliance



**RAYMOND JACKSON**  
Leo, Strength

I didn't really "hear" this album all at once: at first, I thought it was your typical soul album of the time, two or three hits, plus a lotta filler, including versions of everybody else's hits, but it grew on me. Even "Light My Fire", based on Jose Feliciano's version, makes it, although in spirit it veers dangerously close to the cocktail lounge. At the time this was released, famed rock writer Lester Bangs gave it a positive writeup in *Rolling Stone*, praising the band to the skies for daring to try to take soul music to a different level without sacrificing their integrity. This was an interesting period---a lot of great soul music was released in '69, but there were also a lot of very shallow attempts to, ahem, "broaden the audience." The once-mighty Motown empire was weakening---the Supremes, with Diana Ross' name up front, were too busy making goo-goo eyes at Las Vegas to get down to making some decent music. The Temptations recorded some great psychedelic soul like "Cloud Nine", but compared to Sly Stone,

the Watts Band, Funkadelic, the Isleys, and all the other acid-drenched soul outfits that were to follow, the Tempts' psychedelic phase seemed less like a revolutionary idea and more like a bandwagon-jumping marketing strategy. The Watts Band, in the meantime, decided that it wasn't "nothin' but a party" and absorbed all kinds of sounds. When they decided to get experimental, they sounded *stylish*. As opposed to *trendy*, like Motown's people.

As Lester Bangs predicted, the group, like Sly Stone though on a smaller scale, absorbed more funk and rock influences, and they would go on to make that one drop-dead funk/rock masterpiece, but the uneven *Express Yourself* was not it. First the good points: the five-star title track, which, like "Love Land" and "Do Your Thing", was a big pop hit as well as soul. The guys were in top form here: a bass line so

deadly it'd most likely kill you, New Orleans-styled drumming like you hear on Meters records, insane scat singing from Wright (dig that hoarse falsetto towards the end---the man was having fun that day), and more lyrics that cause the mind to think deeply. To wit: "It ain't what you look like when you're doin' what you're doin', it's what you're doin' when you're doin' what you look like you're doin'---EXPRESS YOURSELF!!" (No stranger to self-plagiarism, a 1972 single credited to Wright only, which was titled "You Gotta Know Whatcha Doin'", freely ripped off "Express Yourself".) Then there's "I Got Love", a song so great that Wright recorded it three more times---the second time was on their next album (as "I Got Your Love"), the third time was on an obscure 1972 single on Warners, and the fourth time was on a Charles Wright solo album (as "That's All That Matters Babe"). Get it however you can, but keep an eye out for the single, 'cause it's the best of the four versions. And then there's "Love Land", the late-blooming hit from *Jungle* making its' second appearance on *Express*. With those out of the way, now for the other three cuts, a/k/a the duds. On occasion, the group would attempt a straightforward,

conventional soul number. Sometimes it worked ("Love Land" and "Living On Borrowed Time", the flip side to the "Express Yourself" 45), and sometimes it didn't, and that was the case with "I'm Aware". That leaves us with "High As Apple Pie", slices one and two. On occasion, the group would come up with the schlockiest melodies that even by Wayne Newton standards fall flat. Both parts of "Apple Pie" are in that category, and not even the mellifluous tones of Wright can save this.

The band bowed out on an up note with *You're So Beautiful*, the title track of which was later covered by the rock band NRBQ. Remember the "masterpiece" album I alluded to about a paragraph ago? This 1971 epic is it! Side one, cut one is an interesting little ditty called "Express Yourself II"---a slowed-down version of the melody from the first "Express" starts it off, followed by Wright the band getting into a very odd call-and-response acapella thing. With only a drumbeat holding it up, Wright will sing some nonsensical phrase in a weird falsetto voice, only to have the band

the same thing! Words not do this justice---Wright was clearly "expressing himself", for what it was worth, and you should hear it! Also out there: "Your Love Means Everything To Me", the hit 45 from the album, which again milked the same "Do Your Thing" formula (it ain't soundin' tired); "What Can You Bring Me", once again featuring the vocal talents of Jan Gadson (good backing vocals on this one), and the not-to-be-believed track.

The band's penchant for schmaltzy melodies, all the lines of Diana Ross' "Reach Out & Touch Somebody's Hand", have been popping up in odd places for some time (back to "My Summer's Gone", a full-blown

studio production that appeared on the mostly live

*Together*), and this is probably the only Watts Band song in that genre I can stand. Over a staid sounding background (sounds like the Carpenters' "Close To You" in spots), Wright slurs and stretches words to the breaking point, moans, groans, sings and even whistles off-key (*ain't nothin' but a party!*). Ever wonder what Sammy Davis Jr. would sound like if someone spiked his martini? This be it! You have to crack a smile when you hear this (I bet Wright definitely was!). Very surreal. 1971 was a year of several cornerstones of what was then known as "black rock": Funkadelic's *Maggot Brain*, Sly and the Family Stone's *There's A Riot Goin' On*, Stevie Wonder's *Wholly I'm Coming From*, Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On*. *You're So Beautiful* belongs right in there.

The Watts Band released quite a few singles that never made it to a LP, and 1971 saw a couple of their most notable, including the negligible "Solution for Pollution". At the time, there were thousands of records out dealing with either (a) pollution, or (b) hot pants. Like most records dealing with current media happenings (streaking, Watergate, CB radios, the old slogan for Wendy's



(Watts cont.) hamburgers "where's the beef?", etc.) most of these records stunk up the place something awful (James Brown's "Hot Pants" is an exception), and the Watts Band's "Pollution" record is no different. (In case you were wondering, lyrically it's very heavy handed, and musically it's from the same "schlock school" that produced "My Summer's Gone", and "High As Apple Pie", "slice one" of which was "Pollution"'s B-side, making it a truly gruesome twosome.)

And then there was the great "Wine"! The other side, "Nobody Tellin' Me 'Bout My Baby" is an ordinary soul number, but oh, that "Wine"! Over a musical background that might as well be "Do Your Thing, Part 99", Wright recites the tale of a gentleman who "put down that champagne bottle and started drinkin' White Port" after his girlfriend leaves him! Wright's delivery would do playwright/jazz singer/actor Oscar Brown, Jr. proud as his voice dodges and dips and makes those nearly impossible falsetto turns! I think it's safe to say that this is what's commonly known as a "classic".

However, changes were brewing. For reasons unknown to this writer, the band broke up around this time (a final single, "I Got Love", appeared around '72). With most of the band members being really prominent on the L.A. session scene, it seemed like all the members of the group seemed to pop in and out of one situation or another. Watts Band keyboardist Ray Jackson had a singer-songwriter friend who had a day gig installing toilets on airplanes. After his demo tapes caught the attention of Booker T. Jones (of "and the MG's" fame), he got a record deal with Sussex Records. That guy was Bill Withers, and three of his best albums (*Still Bill*, *Bill Withers Live At Carnegie Hall*, and *+Justments*) have the Watts Band rhythm section playing on them. James Gadson, the "other" singer in the Watts Band, made the occasional single here and there, one of them ("Got To Find My Baby", 1972, on the Cream label) being literally an answer record to (or maybe even being a stone ripoff of) "Love Land". Other members scattered here and there: guitarist Al McKay, who left after *In The Jungle, Babe*, was with Earth, Wind & Fire, while trumpeter Gabe Flemings, until his recent death, led the horn section for Texas bluesman Albert Collins.

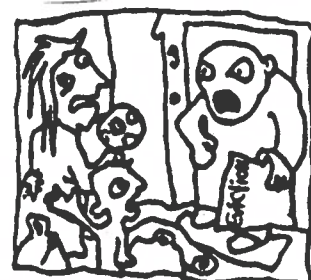
And what of the pickin'-and-grinnin' Wright man himself? Well, there were several solo LP's released as the seventies went on (for Warners and ABC/Dunhill). The last of these albums appeared in '75, and from there, who knows? I've heard bits and pieces of *Doing What Comes Naturally*, which appeared on Dunhill in 1973, and they didn't sound like much, but the cover is classic, quintessential Charles Wright: a car parked on some big-deal L.A. street like Sunset Blvd. or something, with the people inside the car looking very serious, almost like they're hoping to get the photo session over with as quickly as possible. Seated right there on top of the car is Wright, laughing wildly and apparently having a ball! I guess the title really does say it all, here. There was talk of new Watts Band product around '78 (produced by Tony Sylvester from the Main Ingredient), but to my knowledge, this never came to pass. In a year of plastic disco and watered-down funk from the likes of Raydio and GQ, it would have been interesting to see how the Watts Band shaped up.

Like the man says, it all comes back, only a little different each time. *Big Chill*-baby boomer nostalgia for 60's soul (mostly from the vaults of Stax/Atlantic, Motown, James Brown, and little else) in the eighties slowly gave way to funk and (I hate to mention it, but it's true) disco in the nineties. All of a sudden rappers were combing the used record stores for hard beats to sample and rap off of, first starting with P-Funk and James Brown and working their way towards all the other 70's funk groups, including Wright and the crew from Watts. Still, the group has their audience, enough chart records to back it up, and I guess it can all be summed up by rock critic Robert Christgau, in his book *Christgau's Consumer Guide* (the volume where he's reviewing 70's records, as opposed to the 80's volume): "Wright had a talky vocal style that made him sound even more oddball than the other funk pioneers (AMEN BROTHER---JP). I took him for a singles artist around his 1970 heyday, but recently I found an LP in a discount bin, and now I suspect I was wrong." Myself, I'd like to know which LP Christgau found that turned him around, but still the point is well taken. The time has definitely come for them to be rediscovered. It wasn't just "Love Land"!

NOTE: this article was written in August, and the long-awaited Watts Band compilation came out on September 14th. First, the bad news: this does not contain the single "Wine", and it includes only one song from the landmark *You're So Beautiful* LP. And now, the good news: (a) the wretched "Solution For Pollution" was left off, (b) the excellent single version of "I Got Love" was included, (c) John Morthland's informative liner notes don't overlap with this article, and (d) in this day and age of funk reissues, this ranks as one of the best you can buy! Charles Wright helped Gregg Geller with putting this monster together (and when you see Geller's name in the credits, you know that album is gonna kick butt!), and he (Wright) even included a sleeve note that says "IF YOU MUST PARTY DO IT RIGHT—THIS IS



BERNARD BLACKMAN  
Vibro. Warmth



Johny Edelman

# FLAMIN'

## WAYMON TIMBSDAYLE

### KING OF REVIEWLAND



Zines with  
10 pages of  
reviews are as  
B-O-R-I-N-G  
as going to a  
graduation where  
you don't know  
anybody, so get out  
your magna-frying  
glasses, and read  
my tips!

**GENE CHANDLER** "The Duke of Earl"-Vee Jay.  
Smoo-o-ooth, yet sparkly. More classic reissues in this  
yet-to-let-us-down series. ★★

**GEORGE JONES-LIVE, STAR PLAZA THEATER,  
MERRILLVILLE, INDIANA** ★★  
Still the best. Oh mamma--that voice! Bitchin' light  
show!

**TASTE OF DOO WOP, VOL. 2**-Vee Jay. ★★  
Awesome reissues compilation! Pick to Click: "Taste  
Freeze" by the 5 Echoes. Also featuring the  
Impressions, Prodigals, Kool Gents, Magnificents and  
more. Doo buy it!

**TART-Live at Shay's, Chicago** ★★  
Take two bombshell sisters with voices, put a couple of  
axes in their mighty hands and back them up with a  
drumming dude who puts Peter Criss to shame and what  
have you got? Five sticks of dynamite in a two-stick  
bag! Go, girls!

**ENTOMBED "HOLLOWMAN"**-Earache. ★★  
I am surprised by a Swedish band called ENTOMBED.  
I saw 'em live and was unimpressed (bored) but this  
little EP proves to me that they do Thrash. I'm sorry I  
wrote that, but it's appropriate cuz they have retained  
that mid-80's crossover of "HardCore Punk" as it totally  
revitalized the make-up-slathered cadaver of "Heavy  
Metal." Okay, it sorta rocks-I mean Thrashes.  
ENTOMBED is deathly afraid of being mistaken for  
Death Metalers cuz they grow like mushrooms in the  
Swedish countryside since the Berserker  
tempo/GUTTURAL Brute voicings revived memories  
of viking reincarnations for youths.

**THE SPANIELS "Heart and Soul"**-Vee Jay ★★  
Bow wow Wow yippee yo yippie YAY! I love Stevie,  
but it seems like every vocal group today tries to be 4 or  
5 guys all doing that Stevie fluctuating on every note. If  
it was just Guy and Jodeci I could deal, but its every  
group. Now back in the day ... these guys sang!

**THROW THAT BEAT IN THE GARBAGECAN**  
"Cool"-SpinArt P.O. Box 1798 Ny, Ny 10156-1798  
★  
I can barely bring myself to say it but THROW  
THIS TAPE IN THE GARBAGECAN.

**SMUDGE "Tea Toast and Turmoil"**-Half A Cow . P.O.  
Box 1100 Strawberry Hills NSW Australia 2012 ★  
Melodic Punk. Non Threatening. Food Song Titles. ★  
Witty Banter. Poopy.

**VIVIAN SECTION**  
"Pucker"-Mouse Cap Records . 1507 E. 53rd St.  
Chicago, IL 60615 ★  
This made my sphincter pucker. Mishmashed rehash of  
Bauhaus and Joy Division and early Sisters of Mercy.  
Not good.

**COPERNICUS, "NO BORDERLINE"**  
-Nevermore. P.O. Box 170150 Brooklyn, NY. 11217  
★★★★  
Side and self-splitting Black Forest buffoonery. For  
over 2,000 years Western philosophy has failed to  
produce any satisfying answers to interminable  
metaphysical conundrums -- even Heidegger finally  
realized this -- Copernicus hasn't. But it's not that  
simple either, since Copernicus doesn't believe that  
Copernicus exists. Not likely as epochal a project as his  
historical astronomer-namesake's, but much more  
hypocritical and hilarious. Use Copernicus' new release  
to seduce that significant other who's the center of your  
imaginary universe.

-COPERNICUS

**PENNYWISE, "UNKNOWN ROAD"**-Epitaph, 1602  
Sunset Blvd., Suite 111, Hollywood, CA 90028. ★★  
It's a hunk o' punk and I'd be a liar if I said it really  
stunk. Feel free to spend your stupid dollars on  
Pennywise.

**SHADOWY MEN ON A SHADOWY PLANET  
LIVE, LOUNGE AX** ★★  
They made me feel so-o-o good with that crazy  
twang. Never knew Canadians could rock so well (Do  
they know Geddy Lee personally?) Show of shows!  
(also see Farmers interview for more.)

**SMASHING PUMPKINS "Siamese Dream"**-Virgin, I  
think. ★  
If this boring, overrated creative underacheiver is "The  
Chicago Scene's" "Nevermind", than we suck here.

**NATIONAL DRAG "Never Been In Love"** b/w  
"Tonite"-Haggis Records. P.O.Box 408028 Chicago, IL.  
60640 ★★  
Very enjoyable. It's catchy. It's Rock. Listening to this  
wasn't a drag at all.

**PANDORA'S LUNCH BOX, P.O. Box 2071,  
Wilmington, NC 28402-2071** ★  
I liked the movie "Meteor Man" when I saw it. I went  
despite the fact that the TV movie guys said it was lame.  
They weren't mean about it, they were respectful and  
pointed out that all the kids in the theatre dug it. So,  
respectfully, in my opinion, this is lame and pretentious.  
But it's together and well done, and if you send these  
folks anything they'll swap a tape with you, because  
they seem cool and committed to D.I.Y.

**FLAT DUO JETS-Live, Lounge Ax**  
When the singer/guitarist walked out, my date said, "He  
looks whooped." And he did. After breaking a guitar  
string and strap 10 seconds into the first song, he and  
the drummer rumbled through hard-rockin' incoherent,  
drunkably that all sounded good song to song, but  
altogether was just one out of tune blur. So basically, it  
takes two guys to equal one Hasil Adkins. First five  
minutes ★★  
Rest of show ★★

**TEN FOOT POLE "Swill"**-P.O. Box 3237 Simi  
Valley, CA. 93093 ★★  
Scott Radinsky, 10 Foot Pole Vocalist and White Sox  
pitcher must have put this tape in the mail the day after  
his team won the AL West championship. They used to  
be called Scared Straight, but I guess from all the beer  
references in the liner notes that they took the edge off  
their straight edge. It's all pretty good cleaned up  
Hardcore, except when it gets "Funky" with the slap  
bass. Weirdest cut; "Third World Girl", which may be a  
love song from Scott to his wife, Venezuelan shortstop  
Ozzie Guillen's sister-in-law. Hey! If she digs it., who  
am I to judge.

**LIGHTNING ROD "ARYAN OUTLAWS IN A  
ZIONIST POLICE STATE"**-MSR O Stars  
Hmmm...is this?...yes, it is an actual Compact Disc of  
White Power shit. I almost got thru the first song but I  
had to stop them cuz they hurt my feeling. So, I WILL  
JUDGE them on appearance only. Band name refers  
to Nazi ingignia. Albut title refers to what many racist  
organizations call ZOG (Zionist Occupational  
Government): Graphic of lightning bolt striking an  
American flag with 1 big star of David in place of the  
52 'il ones. Label in Seattle. "Sleeve Design: Joseph  
Mengele." Wunderhart!

**SWINGSET POLICE, "PINK"**-Firmata Music, 717  
Main St., Lake Geneva, WI 53147 (414) 248-7012 ★  
I guess this isn't bad, and if it was on a major label it  
could be a hit, but to lay it on the line, if any of these  
songs came on the "alternative" format radio station, I'd  
turn the dial and try to find something I liked. But if  
you like stuff on those stations...

**URGE OVERKILL/LUCIOUS JACKSON LIVE,  
CABARET METRO**  
NY's L.J. was more luscious than LaToya, Tito and  
Michael today; about as luscious as Janet, Andrew and  
Michael circa '86; but not quite as luscious as pre-  
"Thriller" Michael, Cordell, or Jackson Montgomery (of  
"All My Children," played by Walt Wiley). These  
lovely ladies put on a hellified show, at one point  
actually putting their instruments down and singing one  
song Supremes style, with moves and all. ★★  
I dug it. Then the hometown heroes hit the stage and  
basically rocked-ed out! Their LP, "Saturation," by the  
way is a ★★, every cut the jam slab of  
orange vinyl, almost as exciting as KISS "Destroyer".  
Especially KISS-like; Backup singing on "Positive  
Bleeding". They played most of the songs off the LP  
and the all ages alterna-kids loved every second of it,  
and, hey, so did I! My fave tune: "Erica Kane" ★★

\*\*\*\*\*  
I got the next bunch sent to me about the same time and  
had a hard time separating the press kits from the tunes  
and it pissed me off. I don't think that's my fault. Do  
you?

**LOVE BATTERY "Far Gone"**-Sub Pop. ★  
This disc is now Far Gone from my CD player. There  
p.r. kit is more interesting than it's music, which was  
uninteresting. The words used to describe their style,  
such as "psychedelic" and "Trance-educing"  
were ill applied.

**THE HIDDEN "Stop, I'm Bleeding"**-  
Trogledyte. P.O.BOX 608044 Chicago, IL 60660  
★  
Chicago locals with a big ol' p.r. kit and slick art  
direction. Stop. Looks like Skinny Puppy, sounds like  
Midnight Oil. Stop.

**WHITEOUT "Surfstar's Dead"**-Contact Tim, (908)  
571-1930 ★★  
Based on the bio in their p.r. kit, I think they named  
themselves WhiteOut because they inhale it. The music  
is Non Better. Points for D.I.Y.

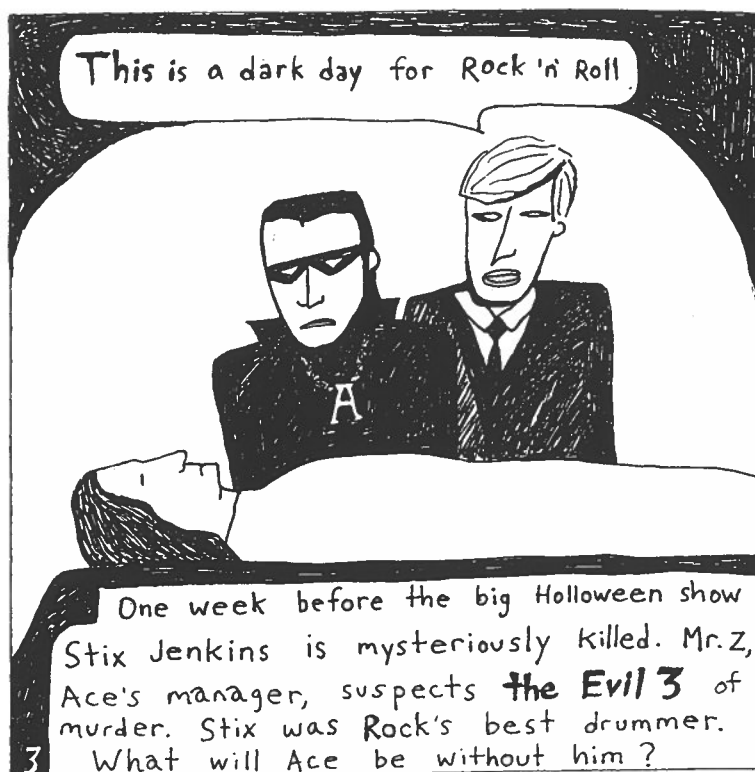
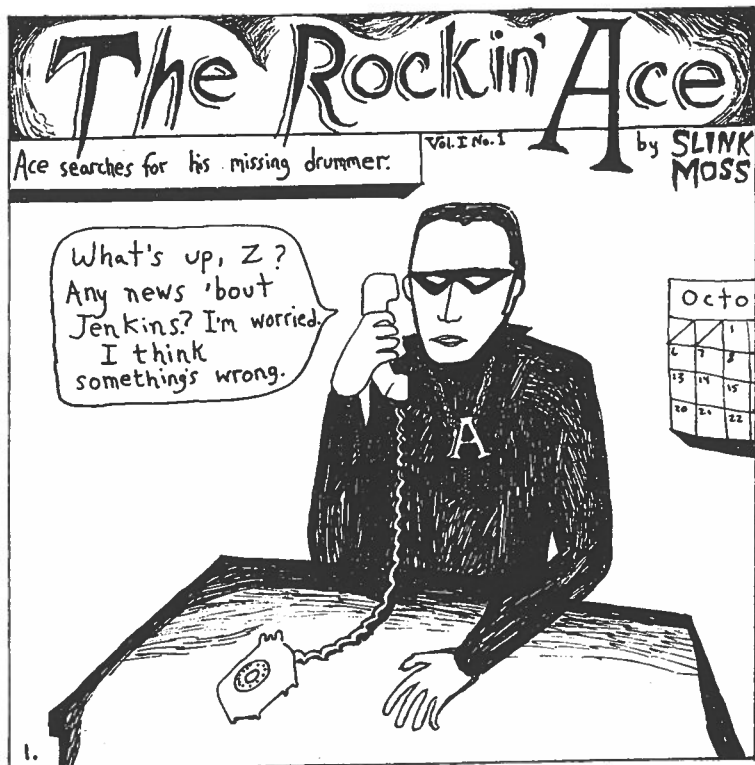
**HOTROD "SpeedDangerDeath"**-Caroline ★  
I hate p.r. kits. An empty, hollow ripoff of My Bloody  
Valentine. Edie Brickell is a talented vocalist and  
songwriter. This was my favorite of the bunch, but I  
hated it.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**WORKING HOLIDAY - AUGUST, SMALL  
FACTORY/Tsunami**-Simple Machines. P.O. Box  
10290, Arlington, VA 22210-1290 ★★  
The SF tune starts up the way people who hate "indie  
pop" think it all sounds, but ends satisfactorily with a  
heaping helping of the "F" word. If you like Tsunami,  
you'll dig their tune here.

**CATHEDRAL "The Ethereal Morror"**-Earache.  
★★  
Oooooohh!! SCARY monsters in their song. This is an  
Olde English Hard Rock Quartet who look like they live  
in castles (they live it!) and play galloping D-tuned  
"Fantasy" proto-metal. I saw 'em live but didn't notice.  
The old grunter from Napalm Death hoarsely howls over  
meaty breaks competently played but generic/familiar.  
Almost good. They are from the English wood.

**JOEY LAWRENCE "Stay Forever"**-some major label.  
★★★★  
"My friends come from Philly and when they see all the  
girls they're shocked! I'm, like, cool." To quote Joey  
Lawrence from People Magazine under a shot of him  
primping in the mirror. Joey is multitalented. Not  
satisfied with acting on TV he also SINGS! Joey's  
debut is first-rate Guido Make-Out R&B. Plus I really  
LUV cassette singles! They're not even long enough to  
tape over! I could drag a strait razor on his gums?

**"SAX APPEAL" VARIOUS ARTISTS**, -Vee Jay  
Vee Jav toots its own horns and its tenor-ific! ★★





music

1423 E. 53rd St. #2  
Chicago, IL

Please Send To: